

**A14 DEVELOPMENT CONSENT ORDER (DCO) FORMAL CONSULTATION RESPONSE**

*To:* Economy and Environment Committee

*Meeting Date:* 27<sup>th</sup> May 2014

*From:* Executive Director, ET&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:* 2014/005                      Key Decision                      Yes.

*Purpose:* To consider the draft proposals of the Highways Agency (HA) for the A14 from Cambridge to Huntingdon Improvement Scheme which are subject to formal consultation until 15<sup>th</sup> June and agree the Council's response

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

a) rescind the eighteen listed objections agreed by the former Council Cabinet to the now withdrawn A14 Ellington to Fen Ditton improvement Scheme, at its meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2009.

b) the Director, ETE in consultation with the Committee Chairman responding to the Highways Agency's current Formal Consultation for the A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon Improvement Scheme, confirming the overall support for the scheme but reserving the position on matters of detail to be discussed and negotiated with Agency prior to its submission of the draft Development Consent Order (DCO) to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS), and

c) receive a further report in the autumn on the draft Development Consent Order (DCO) following its preparation by the Highways Agency.

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## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The protracted history of the development of the A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon scheme over the last 24 years and the longstanding support of the County Council for a major upgrade are well known. Perhaps the most significant step was the “CHUMMS” Study (Cambridge to Huntingdon Multi-Modal Study) in 2001 which recommended a multi-modal approach to the transport issues of the corridor, including principally construction of the Guided Busway, Rail Freight improvements, further demand management in Cambridge, along with a major upgrade of the A14.
- 1.2 That major upgrade was developed by the Highways Agency (HA) to become the A14 Ellington to Fen Ditton Scheme (E-FD). The Council, whilst supporting the scheme had eighteen listed objections which are still outstanding and are recorded with the minutes of the Cabinet meeting of 15/12/2009 and need to be formally rescinded. This scheme was in the event withdrawn by the Coalition Government in July 2010 shortly before the Public Inquiry as it was considered unaffordable. In its place a new multi-modal “Challenge” study led by the Department for Transport (DfT) to re-examine the corridor’s transport needs was undertaken, which reported in November 2012.
- 1.3 In July 2012, the Government announced a policy commitment to the improvement of the A14, but this would have to include tolling and local contributions to reduce the cost to the Government. National funding was then allocated to the new scheme in the June 2013 Spending Review, and this was predicated on the introduction of tolling on the new infrastructure and a local contribution of £100m. The scheme currently being promoted has been developed from the recommendations of the Department for Transport (DfT) “Challenge” Study and is understood to be the largest road scheme in the country with some 25 miles of new and improved road works.
- 1.4 On 4th December 2013, following a wide range of representations during the informal consultation exercise on the scheme held in September and October, the Government decided that tolling would not be part of the scheme proposals. This policy decision changed the likely “dynamics” of the traffic patterns of the scheme and that is likely to benefit the local area and the wider economy.
- 1.5 The scheme has taken many years to develop, but the partnership working of the Local Authorities, Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and other business and interest groups should not be overlooked. The joint working on the recent “Challenge” Study is a prime example and has been highly effective.

## **2. THE PROPOSAL**

- 2.1 Much of the proposed new scheme is similar to the withdrawn scheme which the Council supported. There have been some cost savings and a current estimated cost of £1.35bn has been established as a base figure for the purposes of determining the maximum level of local contributions.

- 2.2 There are four key elements to the new scheme:
- A Huntingdon Southern Bypass, comprising sections of 2 and 3 lane dual carriageway from Ellington to Swavesey. A new addition would be the widening of the A1 to a 3 lane dual carriageway between Brampton and Alconbury.
  - On- line widening of the A14 from Swavesey to Girton, (as a 3 lane dual carriageway from Swavesey to Bar Hill and a 4 lane dual carriageway from Bar Hill to Girton). There would also be a single carriageway local access road from Fen Drayton to Girton running alongside the A14. Although from Fen Drayton to Swavesey it has now been agreed that this length will be a dual carriageway.
  - A simplified Girton interchange than previously proposed, which maintains current major movements.
  - Widening of the A14 Girton to Milton (to 3 lane dual carriageway).
- 2.3 A key feature with the provision of the Huntingdon Southern Bypass is that it will be possible to “de-trunk” the A14 through Huntingdon and remove the viaduct over the railway. This will also enable the rationalisation of the town centre roads and bring significant environmental and community benefits to the town and also to nearby Godmanchester.

### **3. GOVERNANCE – ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 3.1 The withdrawn E-FD scheme was being promoted conventionally under the Highways Act 1980, but the national importance of this scheme now means that it should more appropriately be authorised under the Planning Act 2008 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011). Under this Act a Parliamentary Statement by the Secretary of State (SoS) is used to declare the scheme a nationally significant infrastructure project, which if unchallenged means that it becomes national policy to construct the scheme. Through undertaking this process, a possible challenge on grounds of policy appears to be removed. The DfT has consulted on a draft Policy Statement for the National Road and Rail Networks that will underpin such statements by the SoS, and is expected to publish a final version in the autumn.
- 3.2 The key part of the permission process will be for the HA to obtain a Development Consent Order (DCO) which gives the powers to deliver and operate the scheme. An application in the form of the draft DCO is to be made to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) who will appoint Examining Inspectors to consider the application and the level of consultation undertaken. The Inspectors will consider the evidence, including objections before them and may call for and take additional evidence. Once the application has been accepted, PINS has a limited pre-examination period to call for the representations and a limited period to conduct its investigation and report to the SoS.
- 3.3 The emphasis in this new procedure is on written evidence, with the Inspectors only holding “open floor hearings” for issues on which they require clarity. Under the terms of the Act the County Council will need
- To report on the adequacy of the HA’s consultation process on the scheme proposals,
  - To report on the pros and cons of the scheme but without trying to balance them (as the Inspectors will do that) and,
  - To lodge its own objections to the scheme as set out in the draft DCO.

The Council has also been asked to agree “areas of common ground” with the HA over the scheme.

- 3.4 The Council has a further role in determining the Traffic Regulation Orders that will be needed on County Roads to support the wider scheme, i.e. Clearway Orders, Speed Limits and Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) Orders. These draft orders will have to be considered by the Highways & Infrastructure Committee in the autumn. Legal advice is being sought to clarify the relevant procedure and safeguards as they will need to be included for completeness within the DCO itself.
- 3.5 Finally, the Examining Inspectors’ report is used by the SoS to decide whether to confirm the DCO for the scheme or make any amendments.

#### **4. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN AND TIMETABLE**

- 4.1 **Appendix 1** sets out the HA’s intended timetable for delivery of the scheme. The planned process requires the maintenance and presentation of detailed records of consultation exercises and the views expressed as evidence to support the draft DCO submission. Thus, all comments from the various consultation exercises are being taken forward.
- 4.2 The decision to remove the contingency of tolling has removed an uncertainty over the wider impact of the scheme on other roads in the area, which should simplify the assessment of the impact of the scheme in strategic and transportation terms. The current Formal Consultation exercise that began in April is planned to last for ten weeks until the 15<sup>th</sup> June and it is to this consultation the Council now needs to respond. Drawing on the content of this report, liaison with the District Councils and the ongoing discussions and negotiations with HA, **Appendix 2** contains an outline of the suggested Council response to the Formal Consultation.
- 4.3 It had been planned to make a “preferred route announcement” to protect the route from conflicting developments. However, this has been deferred until after the closure of the Formal Consultation so as not to prejudice the outcome. The submission of the draft DCO to the PINS is scheduled towards the end of 2014. If the anticipated timetable is adhered to, a draft of the DCO, supportive statements and objections will be considered by the Examining Inspectors in the spring of 2015.
- 4.4 The Examining Inspectors then have six months to examine the application, consider objections and write their report for the SoS. The SoS then has three months to consider the report and reach a decision. The timetable suggests this would be by early 2016 with a possible start of construction in December 2016.
- 4.5 In the meantime the HA will continue with design, alongside producing final traffic forecasts, and local environment assessments. This is to ensure the local conditions are fully understood and taken account of by the scheme. .
- 4.6 The HA is undertaking a review of the detail of a number of key local road junctions following representation by the County Council to ensure these have sufficient capacity for current and future needs.

## **5 IMPACTS OF PROPOSALS ON CAMBRIDGESHIRE'S RESIDENTS AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

- 5.1 The scheme is being designed to benefit not only strategic traffic but also to benefit local traffic movement as well. Included within this there is the expectation that with a greater traffic capacity and resilience to incidents for the A14 itself, the tendency for traffic to avoid the A14 and rat run on unsuitable local roads will be substantially reduced. The removal of daily congestion from the A14 will assist that local car travel where neither public transport nor cycling can offer a realistic alternative, and also assist local freight movement.
- 5.2 Design details and traffic forecasts for the new scheme are still being developed so forecasts of noise and air quality levels are not yet available. However, the new scheme is likely to bear a strong resemblance to the previous scheme. For that scheme, extensive estimates of these metrics were made and published. These probably give a guide to how the new scheme would perform.
- 5.3 In short, the earlier work showed that more than 7,200 houses would experience a reduction in noise and less than 2,600 houses would have some, albeit mostly limited, increase when compared to the situation without the scheme. To reduce noise everywhere new roads would receive reduced noise surfacing and 18 noise barriers or earth bunds stretching for 9km in length and up to 7 metres tall would be provided along the route.
- 5.4 With less traffic congestion and changes to traffic patterns, the scheme would have reduced nitrogen dioxide concentrations most noticeably at over 5,000 properties. Annual average particle concentration would reduce at 2,000 properties, but there would be a 3% increase in carbon emissions due to a net increase in vehicle kilometres with the scheme. The Council will need to see compensatory and mitigation measures provided along the route of the scheme.
- 5.5 However, agreement has been reached with Environmental Health Officers over methodology for final assessments, but conclusions will have to await the final details of the scheme and the revised environmental metrics.

## **6. COUNCIL LIABILITY FROM DE-TRUNKED ROADS AND NEW COUNTY ROADS**

- 6.1 As a result of the completion of the scheme, the Council would inherit about 20 kilometres of de-trunked dual carriageway and about 12 kilometres of new single carriageway road. These roads will bring with them liabilities which will need to be accounted for and for which provision will need to be made.
- 6.2 To date, discussions with the Highways Agency have not touched upon reimbursement for costs involved in the work that will be needed to bring those lengths of existing Trunk Road which will be de-trunked up to adoptable standards, or who will be responsible for overseeing the work. In the short

term a framework for such discussions would be appropriate as the transfer of responsibility is some years away and the condition of these heavily used roads will change over that time. Discussions will need to include future responsibilities for maintenance of joint drainage, lighting, landscaping and signing. Detailed assessments of the condition of the existing carriageways, and interchange and river bridges will be needed, and suitable dowry sums agreed.

- 6.3 Separate from these discussions is the dialogue necessary between the Council and the DfT about the future classifications of the de-trunked roads and new local access roads. There are compelling reasons why the majority of these roads should be classified as Principal Roads (County A Roads) and this is also important because traditionally principal status has influenced the level of Revenue Support Grant that the County Council would receive for maintenance costs in the future, following adoption. However, two years ago, the formula based assessment was modified to include an allowance for growth. The current method of assessment is due for revision in 2019 and the higher status should aid future revenue potential.
- 6.4 Parts of the de-trunked network will also merit and need the additional status of Primary Route. This will be required for consistency for signing and longer distance routeing. A further consideration is that historically, DfT has targeted grants towards identified projects on the Primary Route Network and may in the future adopt such a procedure again. The new local access roads will in any event be built to the Council's standard specification as a condition of adoption.

#### Legacy Potential

- 6.5 Early discussions by Officers are taking place with HA and the District Councils over legacy opportunities provided by the scheme. Apart from the legacy of the multi-modal schemes that CHUMMS and the "Challenge" Studies recommended, the A14 improvement scheme itself will be a positive legacy, bringing relief to local communities. Further general opportunities could include the creation of apprenticeships linked to the work being undertaken during the construction of the scheme. Here liaison with the Regional Colleges would be appropriate. Also, outreach activities with schools and other social groups in the A14 corridor would be welcomed.
- 6.6 Scheme wide facilities should include improving cycling facilities and linking up severed Public Rights of Way (PROWs) where there would be benefits to the local communities. Cycle facilities need to be provided to a high standard to attract use. The standard provided adjacent to the Guided Busway, modified to suit for example the local access road, should be provided.
- 6.7 Given the area's long and varied history of human occupation, local archaeological investigations will almost certainly identify items of wide public interest and well chosen selections could be of great interest to local residents and travellers alike. It may be possible to arrange regular or permanent displays in public areas.
- 6.8 Finally, the traffic reductions in Huntingdon and Godmanchester will provide the opportunity for localised environmental improvement schemes.

## **7. ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

### **7.1 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 economic 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.
- In particular Huntingdon and Godmanchester should receive an economic impetus with development opportunities that should flow from the reduction of traffic in the towns.
- It is understood that the intention is that the scheme will “facilitate” the provision of the eventual full build out of the new town of Northstowe. Also, timescales suggest that when the scheme is to begin construction that it is likely to coincide with the beginning of Northstowe phase 2. It is important that construction of adjacent elements of highway infrastructure of the scheme and Northstowe’s access arrangements are co-ordinated for the public good. Therefore the HA and the Homes and Communities Agency (developers of phase 2) should work together to achieve that co-ordination.
- 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.

### **7.2 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. It is likely additional footpath linkage will encourage more walking and exercise activity.

### **7.3 Supporting and protecting vulnerable people**

There are no significant implications for this priority.

## **8. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS**

### **8.1 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 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 payments will need to be negotiated with DfT/ HA before the County Council should accept these responsibilities (See para. 6.2 above).

- 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. (See paragraphs. 6.3 & 6.4 above).

## **8.2 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.

## **8.3 Equality and Diversity Implications**

There are no significant implications within this category.

## **8.4 Engagement and Consultation Implications**

There has been extensive and commendable consultation across the social and business community in the A14 corridor by the HA on the current A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon Scheme.

## **8.5 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 or City /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/ exhibitions solely for elected Members, when invitations were sent to County Members and the District Councils..

## **8.6 Public Health Implications**

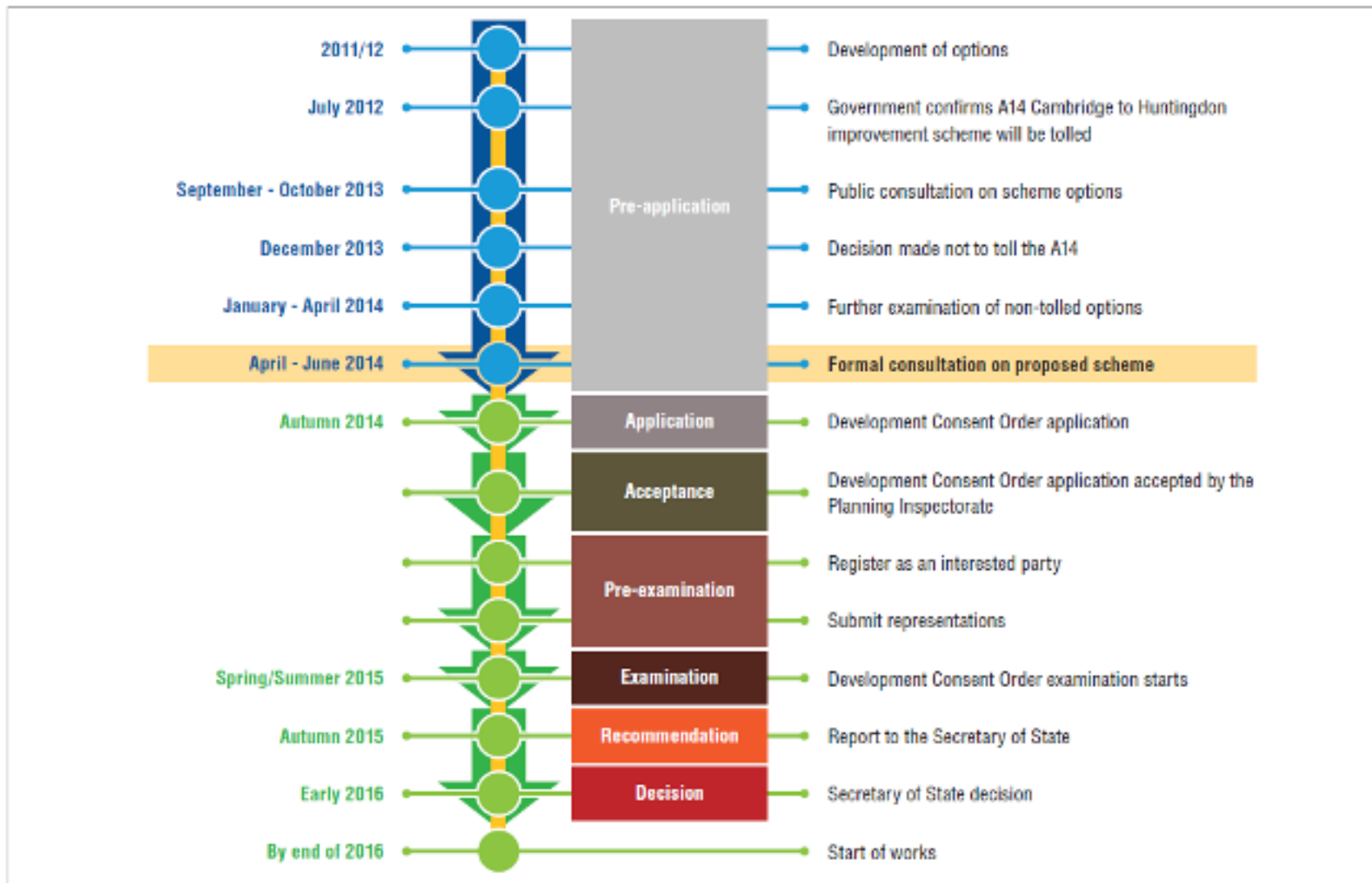
There will be major air quality and noise benefits in the Huntingdon and Godmanchester central areas. There are potential air quality benefits across a wider area with the significant reduction the nitrous oxides and particulate levels likely with the scheme. However, there will be areas where there are negative impacts and significant mitigation will be needed. (See paragraph. 5.4 above)

<b>Source Documents</b>	<b>Location</b>
<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>Location of Hard Copies of documents: Room 2A Castle Court</p>



<p>County Council Cabinet Agendas and Minutes can be found at:</p> <p><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 outstanding objections to the withdrawn scheme can be viewed in Appendix 1 in the Cabinet Report at item 11</p> <p><a href="http://www2.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/CommitteeMinutes/Committees/Meeting.aspx?meetingID=57">http://www2.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/CommitteeMinutes/Committees/Meeting.aspx?meetingID=57</a></p> <p>The DfT “Challenge Study” documentation can be found at <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/a14-challenge">https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/a14-challenge</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>Details of the Highways Agency’s A14 Informal Consultation exercise of September/ October 2013 and an explanation of the draft scheme can be found at</p> <p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/a14-cambridge-to-huntingdon-improvement-scheme">https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/a14-cambridge-to-huntingdon-improvement-scheme</a></p> <p>Details of the Highways Agency’s current A14 Formal Consultation exercise from extending from April to 16<sup>th</sup> June 2014 can be found at</p> <p><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>Shire Hall, Cambridge, CB3 0AP</p> <p>.</p>
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## Appendix 1 THE ANTICIPATED A14 SCHEME TIMELINE TO CONSTRUCTION



Proposed timeline to construction

## **SUGGESTED COUNTY COUNCIL SUBMISSION IN RESPONSE TO THE HA'S FORMAL CONSULTATION**

### **This submission**

The undertaking of the Formal Consultation on the scheme requires a response from the County Council, principally as local highway and strategic planning authority. The main points to be made are suggested below.

### **The Scheme and its Overall Impact**

1. Confirmation of support for the need for the improvement scheme to achieve the five listed objectives of combating congestion, unlocking growth, connecting people, improving safety and creating a positive legacy. (The success of these objectives will need to be qualified by the outcome of ongoing discussions).
2. Support for the route option as offering the right solution to address current problems and to meet future needs. This includes the de-trunking of the A14 through Huntingdon and removal of the A14 Viaduct.
3. In respect of support and acceptance of the mitigation measures proposed for their potential to address adverse environmental impact of the scheme, this will depend on future detailed discussions with the Agency.
4. Detailed discussions will be necessary with the HA on minimisation and mitigation of the environmental impact during construction

### **The Main Elements of the Scheme**

- 5a. Support for widening of A1 between Brampton and Alconbury.
- 5b. The alternative layout now proposed for the A1 and A14 junction adjacent to Brampton is supported providing adequate noise mitigation is installed to minimise vehicular noise from the A14 over bridge.
- 5c. The County Council supports the demolition of the Huntingdon A14 Viaduct and the related changes to the local roads. This is subject to ongoing detailed discussions which include minimising the environmental impact on the commons, the Hinchbrooke Park Road junction and the potential for a separate cycle / footbridge adjacent to the Brampton Road railway bridge following removal of the viaduct
- 5d. The new Huntingdon Southern Bypass is supported, subject to further discussions on the River Great Ouse crossing, the potential of a "Green Bridge", alignment details of the road over bridges and noise mitigation to protect nearby villages.
- 5e. The proposed widening of the existing A14 between Swavesey and Girton is supported subject to further discussions on the Bar Hill junction capacity and resilience, noise mitigation at Girton and the NMU routes through these junctions.
- 5f. The proposed widening of the existing Cambridge Northern Bypass is supported subject to detailed discussions on the noise mitigation along the whole Northern Bypass and the detailed changes suggested for the Histon and Milton Interchange roundabouts.
- 5g. The proposals for the Local Access Road are supported subject to localised detail at the Swavesey, Bar Hill and Girton junctions in respect to long term capacity and resilience.

### **Other Outstanding Issues**

The Council provided Officers' comments on the Highways Agency's draft Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report (EIA) in a letter dated the 7<sup>th</sup> March and further comments to the Planning Inspectorate on the 16<sup>th</sup> April in respect of a revised EIA submitted to the PINS for a "scoping opinion".

On the basis of the content of these letters, the County Council will need to further assess how the scheme and the proposals for construction comply with the advice given. Areas of concern are

- The need for the final traffic forecasts for the scheme, upon which a number of assessment and design metrics will depend.
- Detail of drainage in respect of flooding mitigation for water courses where the County Council is the responsible authority.
- Completion of the agreement between the Council and the HA to cover compensation for disruption to Guided Bus services from the operation to widen of the A14 over bridge on the Cambridge Northern Bypass
- The undertaking of extensive archaeological investigation and the making of provision for longer term public display of discoveries.
- The re-connection of severed NMU links and provision of new facilities, to enhance local connectivity e.g. the need for enhanced cycle/ walking facilities along the local access road and the extension of cycle/ footpath from Fen Drayton/ Swavesey to Fenstanton,
- The need for definitive details on the sources of materials and disposal of waste from the scheme. Some 7 million tonnes of materials are likely to be needed and initial comments on the appraisal of prospective borrow pit sites was given and further information sought on other sources of materials, ie redundant airfields, imported hard rock. The conditions for restoration of borrow pits has also been given.
- In relation to advice on ecology, the theme has been to seek enhanced biodiversity in a relatively low quality corridor. Thus, wildlife corridors should be focused on thereby creating a resilience ecological network across the landscape.
- Landscape, Noise and Vibration, Public and Environmental Health and Air Quality need to be taken forward in conjunction with District Council partners.

#### The Need for Agreement on Areas of Joint / Overlapping Responsibility

There will be areas of common interest particularly where the re-aligned A14 and the local access road run in parallel. Thus, there will be the need to formally agree responsibility on:

- Highway boundaries
- Highway lighting
- Joint drainage, including balancing ponds and drains
- Highway signing and telematics
- Responsibility for fencing

#### De-trunking Dowry Costs

There is the need to re-commence discussions on the formation of a framework for the assessment of the condition and restoration costs of the highways to be de-trunked in about 2020. This will include the investigation of the residual life of carriageways, the structural condition of the bridge and culverts, and the adequacy of drains and balancing ponds.