

A14 DEVELOPMENT CONSENT ORDER (DCO) – PROCESS AND NEGOTIATIONS
UPDATE ON ISSUES RAISED IN THE COUNTY COUNCIL'S CONSULTATION
RESPONSE

To: Economy and Environment Committee

Meeting Date: 16th September 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: Not applicable Key Decision No

Purpose: To brief the Committee on the Development Consent Order (DCO) process and likely timetable of actions requiring County Council consideration and input. In addition to advise on how the Highways Agency (HA) is addressing issues raised in the County Council's response to their consultation on the A14.

Recommendation: It is recommended that the Committee agree to note the process, timescales and progress with the HA on addressing issues and comment on this and the way forward.

<i>Officer contact:</i>	
Name:	Bob Menzies
Post:	Service Director, Strategy and Development
Email:	Bob.Menzies@Cambridgeshire.gov.uk
Tel:	01223 715664

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The A14 scheme is the largest single highway scheme in the Country. The scale and importance of the scheme, to improve a 21 mile length of trunk road between Cambridge and Huntingdon (see appendix 1: Map), means that it is now classed as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP). Under this regime, the HA must obtain consent under the Planning Act 2008 by means of submitting a Development Consent Order (DCO) application to the Secretary of State. Submission of the DCO is anticipated to be in November.
- 1.2 This new consent regime, enables the bringing together of a range of different consent regimes into a more streamlined process. There are also greater requirements for pre-application consultation and consideration of the issues up front. To date, the HA has been through two rounds of informal consultation, most recently concluding their pre-application consultation which ran for 10 weeks. The outcome of the consultation exercises will influence the basis of the DCO. The HA are currently assessing the responses to the consultation. At the same time as submitting the DCO, the HA will also submit a Consultation Report setting out in summary the key issues raised in the consultation and how these have been addressed.
- 1.3 The County Council has been working with the HA to progress consideration of issues raised in our consultation response. While some progress is being made, this is limited as the detail has yet to be made available. In this regard, supporting technical documents such as the Environmental Statement are critically important and this will need to be carefully scrutinised to inform our response.

2. THE PROCESS AND LIKELY TIMESCALE

- 2.1 As a key stakeholder and a statutory consultee, the County Council will need to respond at key stages in the DCO process. The first requirement relates to the adequacy of the applicant's consultation. After the application has been received, 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 and whether the authority agrees with this and whether the applicant consulted in accordance with that the Statement. A report will be taken to Committee in November outlining our assessment of the consultation to seek views and endorsement. See Appendix 2 for the programme.
- 2.2 The County Council will also need to work closely with the HA to develop a Statement of Common Ground as well as providing representations on the DCO. This needs to be submitted ahead of the Examination, anticipated currently around March 2015. Reports will be drafted for Committee consideration during February 2015. After this, a Local Impact Report will need to be submitted by the County Council to the Planning Inspectorate detailing the likely impact of the proposed development on the authority's area. The timing for this is anticipated to be May or June 2015. See Appendix 2 for the programme.

3. PROGRESS ON ADDRESSING KEY ISSUES RAISED IN OUR CONSULTATION RESPONSE

- 3.1 Much of the specific detail on the scheme is still awaited in terms of traffic forecasts and likely environmental impacts and mitigation proposed, through the Environmental Statement (ES). This information is critically important and the County Council will need time to scrutinise and assess likely performance and impacts of the scheme. However in the interim officers have been meeting with the HA to progress issues and areas of concern raised in our consultation response.
- 3.2 Significant issues that need to be considered and agreed include ongoing maintenance costs for new County roads and detrunking and related dowry costs. Agreement will also be needed in relation to areas of common interest such as traffic management and the 'legacy' of the scheme including heritage, ecology and archaeology, and future plans for the management and maintenance of the Borrow Pits.
- 3.4 Traffic Forecasts – The HA is due to publish revised traffic forecasts for the proposed scheme imminently. These forecasts are needed as soon as possible to provide a basic outline of scheme performance, capacity and junction designs.
- 3.5 Noise Mitigation – Concerns were raised as to whether adequate noise mitigation, had been included, especially for key sensitive locations along the route. The HA confirmed that enhanced noise mitigation will be provided where sensitive areas have been identified, such as near Brampton and Hilton, and for the whole of the Cambridge Northern Bypass. The HA have confirmed that a degree of positive flexibility will be applied to levels of noise mitigation across the scheme. Details will be provided as part of the ES.
- 3.6 Huntingdon - Impact on the Commons. Concerns were raised regarding likely impact on the Commons. In response, the HA is looking at reducing land take and likely impacts on the Common, and revised designs are expected to demonstrate this.
- 3.7 Removal of the viaduct – Concerns were raised regarding the potential impact of reduced capacity for walking and cycling along Hinchbrook Park Road following the removal of the viaduct. The HA latest plans show that the design at the Hinchbrook Park Road Junction has been altered to make use of the existing loop. This enables more capacity in the area and the potential for a drop off area for coaches near to the school.
- 3.8 Once the viaduct is removed concerns remain regarding capacity and safety for those walking and cycling along Brampton Road. The HA have confirmed that they are not planning to provide a footway and cycle bridge adjacent to the Brampton Road Railway bridge. The HA plan to return the road to its original state with a 2m wide footpath. The HA has offered to work with partners to look at potential solutions for a bridge in this location, including providing footings, so that a scheme could be put in place at a future date.
- 3.9 From a County Council perspective, this approach is unlikely to be

satisfactory. Some assessment of footfall, and pedestrian and cyclist flow in this area will need to be undertaken to identify likely implications. The County Council is keen to ensure that the scheme includes proper and adequate provision for cycling and walking especially given that this is a busy route linking the town to a school and hospital.

- 3.10 Ecology and environmental issues. At this stage, there is little detail available to assess progress on issues raised. Up to date ecological survey results will need to be included in the Environmental Statement, which is expected to be made available in chapters over the coming months. Officers will consider potential impacts in drawing up the County's response to the DCO. Officers have thus far raised concerns over likely impacts on Buckden Gravel Pits County Wildlife site (CWS) and potential impacts on River Great Ouse CWS. Some habitat may be lost and some protected species could be adversely affected.
- 3.11 It will be important to ensure that the scheme includes proposals to enable safe movement for wildlife, whether through provision of Green bridges and culverts, to ensure that the new scheme does not become more of a barrier for wildlife. The HA has raised the need for strong evidence to justify any case for a Green bridge and that the costs and land take could be significant. Officers need to assess information in the ES once available, to determine outstanding issues.
- 3.12 Archaeology – Extensive archaeological investigations will be necessary and officers have raised concerns regarding delays with arranging access to the land for fieldwork to begin. This will impact on the development and availability of the heritage evidence and the historic environment mitigation design section of the ES. Officers are keen to ensure that the HA expedite the work required to inform the mitigation design for archaeology, historic environment and legacy works, in time for the submission of the DCO. Discussions have been ongoing and the archaeological assessment will form part of the ES, and the HA have confirmed that they are open to considering possibilities for the display of discoveries or public viewing points.
- 3.13 Floods and Water Officers have been working with partners, including the Environment Agency, to compile a list of critical watercourses where the County Council will be seeking to retain consenting powers. Discussions are ongoing and a definitive list will be forwarded to the HA consultants during August.
- 3.14 Capacity and resilience to cater for growth. The HA has confirmed that revised traffic forecasts will be issued in August, and these results will be analysed. Members also queried whether the widening between Swavsey and Girton and designs of Bar Hill junctions would have sufficient capacity to cope with full build out of Northstowe. The HA has confirmed that the design of the Bar Hill junction has capacity to facilitate Phase 1 and 2 of Northstowe. In addition, the latest design of the Bar hill junction is proposed to include the key structures needed to cater for the full build out of Northstowe.
- 3.15 Hilton Overbridge Height – Concerns were raised as to whether this bridge would be higher than that proposed in the previous scheme. The HA has confirmed that this will be 2m above the existing ground level which is the same as proposed previously.

- 3.16 Rights of Way and Accessibility –Progress is being made on issues raised. Provision is being made for a route for non-motorised users alongside the local access road that will run alongside the A14 and officers are working with the HA to ensure that any Public Rights of Way (PROW) severed by the new route of the A14 will be diverted to an appropriate crossing point. The HA has also confirmed that there will be an extension of the cycleway / footpath from Fen Drayton and Swavesey to Fenstanton. In relation to Bridleway 19, the HA has confirmed that the new scheme reconnects and includes a road bridge with a parallel footbridge connecting back to the Bridleway 19 link.
- 3.17 Borrow Pits and Planning - Detailed discussions have been taking place with regard to Borrow Pits to provide the mineral required for the construction of the road. Six sites have been identified, four of which fully accord with areas of search specifically identified for this purpose within the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Development Plan. Of the remaining two sites, one is partly within an identified area of search and the other is immediately adjacent to one.
- 3.18 Detailed advice has been provided on planning constraints and environmental considerations relating to the borrow pits. Alternative options for restoration have been discussed and advice has been provided on opportunities for public access and biodiversity as part of the restoration of the sites, as well as the need to address archaeological, ecological and amenity impacts during excavation. The HA has been advised that, where the proposed after-use is for nature conservation, the County Council would expect to see an after scheme for a minimum of 10 years to guarantee the establishment of the site.
- 3.19 Advice has also been given on the need to consider the broader logistics of the constructional requirements in terms of routeing of vehicles supplying minerals to the site and the location of processing plant (including concrete and asphalt batching plant). In the event, as seems likely, that crushed rock is to be imported via the rail terminal at Chesterton, it has been suggested that the application should make provision for direct access to the A14. Discussions are continuing and will include matters to be covered in the Statement of Common Ground and the agreement of draft conditions for the borrow pits.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 Progress has been made on particular issues as outlined above. However, there is much work to do, and further information is required on traffic forecasts and the likely environmental impacts and mitigation measures proposed to ascertain likely scheme performance and likely implications. This will need careful scrutiny to help inform the County Council's response to the consultation, Statement of Common Ground and Local Impact Report over the next 6 months.
- 4.2 Members are invited to note the process, timescales and progress with the HA on addressing issues and comment on this and the way forward.

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.
- 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.

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. It is likely 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 payments will need to be negotiated with Department

for Transport (DfT)/ Highways Agency (HA) before the County Council should accept these responsibilities (See para. 3.2 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 paragraph 3.2 above).
- the need 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 and commendable consultation across the social and business community in the A14 corridor by the HA on the current A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon Scheme.

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.

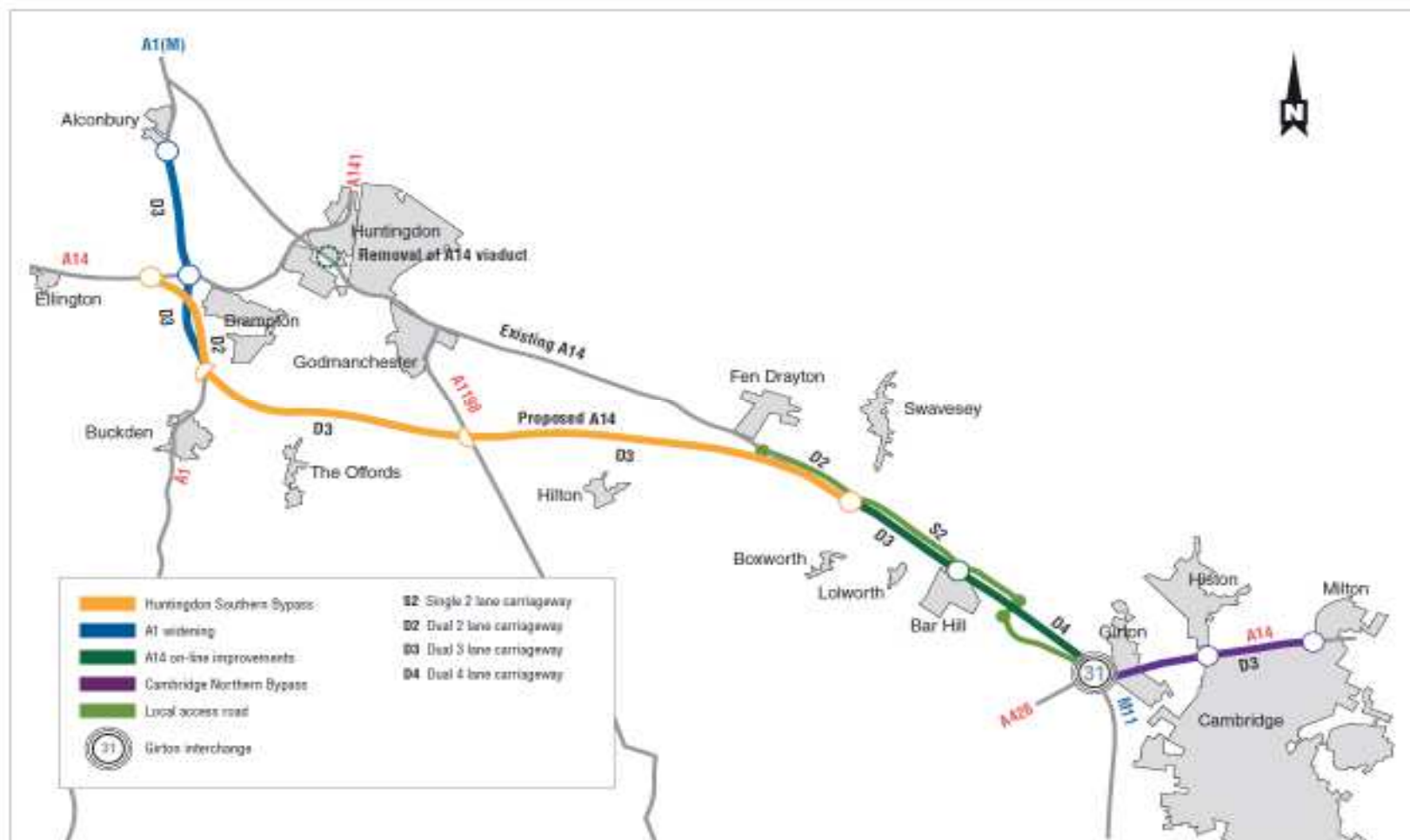
6.6 Public Health Implications

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 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.

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, & 29/10/13</p> <p>County Council Cabinet Agendas and Minutes can be found at: http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/CMSWebsite/Apps/Committees/Committee.aspx?committeeID=11</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>http://www2.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/CommitteeMinutes/Committees/Meeting.aspx?meetingID=689</p>	<p>Location of Hard Copies of documents: Room 2A Castle Court Shire Hall, Cambridge, CB3 0AP</p>

Appendix 1

A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon proposed improvement scheme



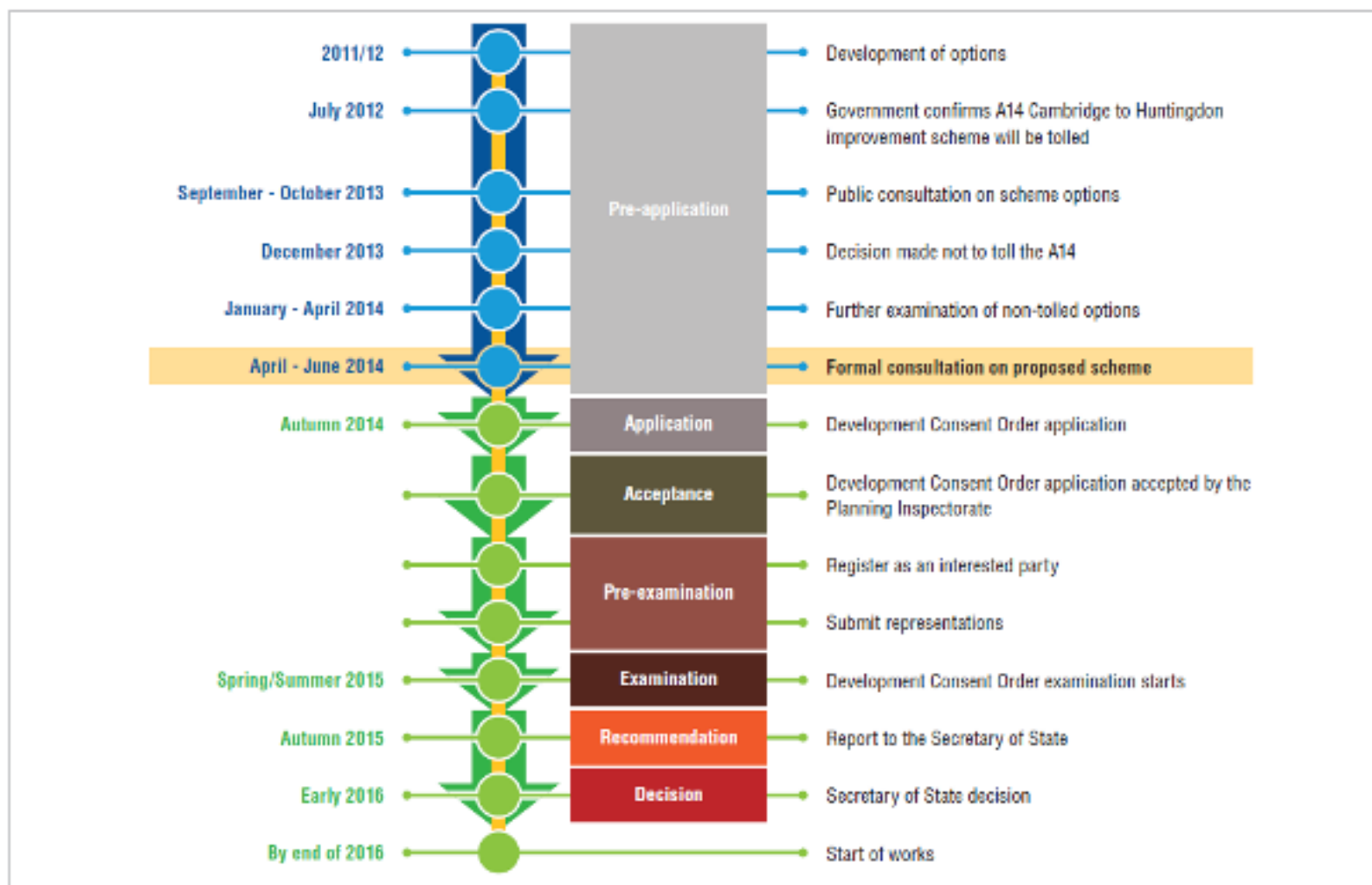
Appendix 2

THE ANTICIPATED A14 SCHEME TIMELINE TO CONSTRUCTION

Cambridgeshire County Council indicative timetable

Indicative Timetable*	*determined by when DCO submitted
Date	Stage
October / November 2014	DCO submitted by HA
November 2014	Adequacy of Consultation report to E&E Committee
November 2014	Adequacy of Consultation report submitted
January 2015	Pre-examination period begins
February 2015	Statement of Common Ground along with formal response to submission of DCO to E&E and H&I committee
March 2015	Statement of Common Ground submitted along with formal response to submission of DCO
March / April 2015	Start of Examination Period
May / June 2015	Local Impact Report to E&E and H&I committee
June / July 2015	Local Impact Report produced and submitted to PINS
September 2015	DCO Recommendation – Report to Secretary of State (SoS)
January 2016	Decision by SoS
December 2016	Start of Works

Highways Agency proposed timeline to construction



Proposed timeline to construction