

A14 STUDY- FINAL REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

To: **Cabinet**

Date: **17th September 2012**

From: **Service Director: Strategy and Development**

Electoral division(s): **All**

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

Purpose: **To update Cabinet on progress with the Department for Transport-led A14 Study and to seek approval for continuing to work with partners to finalise the scheme proposals and delivery.**

Recommendation: **Cabinet is asked to:**

- a) Note progress on the A14 Study and comment on the report.**
- b) Note the policy commitment from Government for the A14 improvement.**
- c) Confirm that the County Council should work with Government, other Local Authorities and business partners in the Region to secure sufficient funding to enable delivery of the scheme in the earliest possible time.**

<i>Officer contact:</i>		<i>Member contact:</i>	
Name:	Graham Hughes	Name:	Ian Bates
Post:	Service Director: Strategy and Development	Portfolio:	Growth and Planning
Email:	Graham.Hughes@Cambridgeshire.gov.uk	Email:	Ian.Bates@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
Tel:	01223	Tel:	01223 699173

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To update Cabinet on progress with the Department for Transport-led A14 Study and to seek approval for continuing to work with partners to finalise the scheme proposals.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 After the A14 improvement scheme was withdrawn in October 2010 on affordability grounds, the Government undertook to study, with partners, the multi-modal needs of the whole A14 corridor. That A14 Corridor Study began in earnest following the 2011 Autumn Statement. In this, the Chancellor set out the Government's high-level commitment to "increasing capacity and improving performance on the A14". The Government confirmed that the scope for relieving congestion by improving other modes including freight facilities and public transport would be explored.
- 2.2 The Council has been working with the Department for Transport (DfT) and local partners on both a Study Project Board and a Study Steering Group. Good progress has been made with the Phase 1 study report being quickly completed in December 2011. This identified the problems (congestion, safety, lack of resilience) and challenges (supporting economic growth, social and environmental impact) associated with the A14 and this brought no particular surprises.
- 2.3 Phase 2 of the Study was completed in June and the results were published on the DfT Website (see Source Documents below). This part of the Study reviewed a long list of public transport, freight and highway options for the corridor and produced a list of eleven packages (three public transport, two freight and six highway options) for detailed analysis in Phase 3 of the study. The potential financing of the packages, including private sector involvement, travel demand management and revenue generation through tolling were also briefly considered.
- 2.4 Phase 3 of the study was completed as planned in July. At the time of writing this report, this has not yet been published but it is understood it will be shortly.
- 2.5 Although the phase 3 study report has not yet been published, given the widely recognised urgency of moving forward development issues in the A14 corridor, the Secretary of State concluded that there had been enough progress for her to make a positive policy statement on the 18th July, crucially, this statement puts the A14 improvement scheme into the DfT's committed major roads programme.

3. THE KEY ELEMENTS OF THE GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCEMENT

- 3.1 The Secretary of State's announcement "Innovative New Proposals for A14 Corridor" made on the 18th July, 2012 is a policy commitment by the Government for the A14 improvement, but it does not yet amount to a detailed route plan.
- 3.2 Key elements identified in the announcement were, (officers' comments in italics):

- **“A new bypass to replace the existing road around Huntingdon.”**
This will be a new Huntingdon Southern Bypass, but its standard is not clearly spelt out.
- **“Upgrades along A14 as far east as Milton”.**
This will be the widening of the Cambridge Northern Bypass from Girton to Milton. The standard has not been specified, but is most likely to be a 3 lane dual carriageway. The widening from Milton to Fen Ditton has not been included in this scheme.
- **“Two new roads would be built in parallel to, with one each side of, the current A14 immediately north of Cambridge for local use”.**
These will be the local access roads to serve local and development traffic, and it is likely that these would be two lane roads with traffic travelling towards Cambridge on the eastern side and away from Cambridge on the western side.
- **“Meanwhile, the existing A14 carriageway will be upgraded through the removal of accesses and junctions, and improvements to junctions at the northern and southern ends”**
This is expected to amount to upgrading of the main carriageway for long distance traffic between Girton and Fen Drayton. It is assumed that the junctions at the ends would mean an upgrading of Girton Interchange and a new junction sited near the existing Trinity Foot junction, as proposed in the withdrawn scheme.
- **Tolling in part to fund improvements, but more work required.**
This implies that certain lengths are likely to be tolled. This would most probably include the bypass south of Huntingdon and the length of upgraded A14 between Girton and Trinity Foot.

The tolling of the Cambridge Northern Bypass is not plausible because whilst it acts as a bypass for Cambridge, it also acts as a distributor road for the City. Tolling of the Milton to Girton section could encourage rat running through the City and so is not being proposed.

- **Rail freight Improvements**
These are very much as expected and are linked to other recent rail investment announcements
- **Supporting Public Transport Improvements**
These are enhancements to local bus services, guided bus and park and ride facilities which will be considered locally with DfT and others.

General Comments

- 3.3 The Government's commitment to implement a major improvement of the A14 between Cambridge and Huntingdon, through adding a scheme to its programme of major schemes with linking work to the next spending review, is a big step forward and provides a greater degree of certainty for taking forward much needed development proposals such as Northstowe.
- 3.4 At this stage, the funding for the scheme is not clear, other than an expectation from the Government announcement that it will consist of a combination of tolling, local funding and central government funding. The proportion for each of these is still to be determined, as is the likely total cost of the scheme.

- 3.5 The issue of the Huntingdon Viaduct has not yet been fully resolved. In respect of tolling viability, the removal of the Viaduct should generate greater revenue and thus help any tolling proposals to be more successful. In addition it would bring significant benefits to Huntingdon and Godmanchester.
- 3.6 It is not clear exactly how the local parallel roads would operate, but they would be expected to be toll free, so that local journeys can be undertaken without a charge, but would also be designed to be an unattractive option for long distance traffic.
- 3.7 The proposed widening to three lane dual carriageway of the A14 between Milton and Fen Ditton (as proposed in the previous withdrawn scheme) is not being included in this proposal.

4. NEXT STEPS AND PROGRAMME

- 4.1 A significant amount of work has been undertaken in the study and huge progress has been made.
- 4.2 As would be expected at this stage, however, much work is still required to finally define the scheme, decide how it will be procured, by whom and what role the Local Authorities will play in its delivery. Nevertheless there are steps which can and should be taken to expedite delivery. The County Council has initiated early discussions between Local Authorities and LEPs in the region to explore how far they can support the financing of the scheme from future revenue streams. In this work, the County Council will be assisted by Local Partnerships, (the 50-50 joint venture between LGA and HM Treasury), whose officers are arranging a series of meetings with the Local Authorities, LEPs and business interests.
- 4.3 Detailed discussions are ongoing with Government about the ultimate funding package, what special delivery arrangements might be instigated to deliver the design, part financing and delivery of the scheme. More work is also needed on determining the optimum tolling strategy to raise revenue with minimising the diversion of traffic to other routes.
- 4.4 The Secretary of State suggested that construction could begin in 2018. If that is to be the case, then detailed scheme design will need to commence soon. The DfT has allocated £5m to the Highways Agency within this current spending period to progress the scheme through the options and development phases review, although the design process is likely to need more funding, even if the scheme draws heavily on the preparatory work of the previous scheme.
- 4.5 The separate announcement, also on 18 July 2012, of the Government's intention to underwrite £50bn of infrastructure investment, may offer an opportunity to help with the delivery of the A14 corridor transport improvements.

5. ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES AND WAYS OF WORKING

Supporting and protecting people when they need it most

- 5.1 There are no significant implications for this priority.

Helping people to live independent and healthy lives in their communities

- 5.2 This scheme when fully implemented will reduce the level of rat running through villages on adjacent roads in the A14 corridor.

Developing our local economy for the benefit of all

- 5.3 The improvement to the traffic capacity of the A14 brought about by this scheme will have a major beneficial impact on the economy of the County and Region. These benefits will include ability to address the housing deficit, providing commercial stimulus to local businesses and inward investment.

Be a genuinely local council

- 5.4 The need for improvement of A14 has very strong support across the region and support from District and County Councillors as well as many MPs. The ongoing development of the scheme will involve public and wider stakeholder consultation and involvement, in which the County Council will play a major part

Making sure services are provided, in the right way

- 5.5 Cambridgeshire County Council would not normally part fund or deliver a Trunk Road scheme. However, this is such an important issue, one the interface with local roads and public transport is so crucial for success of the whole scheme, that it seems essential we continue to play a central role and past experience has shown the Council to have been successful in ensuring such schemes will serve local needs as well as national/regional needs.

Investing in prevention

- 5.6 The provision of additional capacity for the A14 and local roads will help manage pressure on the road network across Cambridgeshire and the wider area, and reduce the financial and social costs of congestion on that network.

Working together

- 5.7 Although the method of delivery of this very large scheme has still to be determined, it will only be delivered with the partnership working of Government, Local Authorities and business interests, in particular the LEPs. A “special delivery vehicle” involving banks, contractors and consultants could be an option.

6. IMPLICATIONS

Resource and Performance Implications

- 6.1 The following paragraphs set out details of significant implications identified by officers:

Scheme cost and funding

- 6.2 There will risks associated with the funding of the capital cost of the scheme and the County Council will need to accept only a cash limited liability in respect of the scheme.
- 6.3 Risks relating to cost of scheme delivery are discussed below.

Delivery mechanism

- 6.4 There are a number of options for delivery of the scheme which are currently being considered by the DfT and Highways Agency. Each may have its risks for cost over –runs and an assessment will be needed of the chosen method.

Resources

- 6.5 Depending on the delivery method eventually chosen and the role of the County Council in its delivery, additional staff resource may be needed to ensure County interests are safeguarded. Funding for this will have to be included in the estimate of any direct cash contributions made by the County Council. The County Council could inherit additional new local roads and probably some de-trunked lengths of road from the scheme as currently described. This will have on-going resource costs for long term maintenance.

Sustainability

- 6.6 The scheme should reduce the excessive congestion that is currently experienced on the A14 and adjacent roads, thus reducing emissions of nitrogen oxides and particulates in the immediate Air Quality Management Areas.

Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

- 6.7 The following paragraphs set out details of significant implications identified by officers:

Planning

- 6.8 The planning and statutory process has yet to be determine but will be linked to the chosen method of delivery, and any proposed scheme will need to go through due process.

Legal

- 6.9 While LGSS will provide legal support, specialist legal advice is likely to be needed in relation to financial contributions. Counsel support would be required for representation at any public hearings / inquiries.

Risk Implications

- 6.10 A comprehensive risk register will need to be developed when it has been decided how the scheme will be delivered and by whom. The scheme enters new policy areas of charging for the use of a new all purpose Trunk Road and the raising of local funding.

Equality and Diversity Implications

- 6.11 There are no equality or diversity issues raised by this scheme

Engagement and Consultation

- 6.12 Public consultation on the scheme will need to take place at various stages during the design and delivery of this scheme. The details of this will not be known until the method of delivery of the scheme has been decided.
- 6.13 The scheme has broad support, including from, Suffolk County Council, Northants County Council and many District Councils across the region.

Public Health Implications

- 6.14 There are no significant implications for any of the prompt questions in this category.

Source Documents	Location
Hard copies of the A14 Study Documentation can be inspected at- Or on-line, A14 Study Documentation can be found at: http://www.dft.gov.uk/consultations/dft-20111212/ Secretary of State's Announcement, 18 th July 2012 : http://www.dft.gov.uk/news/press-releases/dft-press-20120718b/	2 nd Floor, A-wing, Castle Court, Shire Hall