

APPENDIX B

Thank you, Chair, for allowing me to address the Committee. I am speaking as a City Councillor for Ely, East Cambs District Councillor for Ely East and County Councillor for Ely North. I have been the Ward member for Prickwillow and Queen Adelaide for over 5 years, know the area really well and have been privileged to work with the residents on many issues during this time, but this will be by far the most challenging and potentially life changing for the area.

The proposals are also far reaching and for this report I have sought and included statements I have collaged from County and District Councillors for Isleham, Soham and Littleport.

It is no exaggeration to say that since the information broke last year that there was a possibility that road access could be cut off across the 3 railway crossings at Queen Adelaide, these residents have faced devastating uncertainty about the future of their villages, ability to travel about their business, schooling, general day to day activities and value of their properties. And although some communication has been made with them in addition to the Traffic Survey, it is the culmination of this Traffic Study and its likely outcomes that has raised their fears and consumed their thoughts. This has been and continues to be a distressing and difficult time for them all. We cannot underestimate how this feels to these residents.

We are all relieved that the Survey is now out and in the public domain, and being discussed here at this Committee. However, it is important to point out that this traffic survey was undertaken last November/December, the two months in a year when there is minimal, if any, farm traffic on that route. Apart from the sugar beet campaign, virtually no other farming traffic is needed in those months.

It is also with considerable relief that we note the recommendations to the Committee based on the evidence provided by the survey.

The B1382 provides an essential link to Ely for a variety of key services, employment, business and education. It also provides access for customers to businesses in the areas as well as providing access to the fields and yards of the farms. It is clear and endorsed from the survey that there were serious, serious concerns from the residents and businesses in Queen Adelaide and Prickwillow as well as much further afield of the impact of any closures of the rail crossings. There is also a rear fear among the residents that Queen Adelaide and Prickwillow will be isolated from Ely and the impact that this would have. It also needs to be recognised that the road serves the population of a much wider area and is the route into

and out of Ely, and serves the surrounding nearest towns and villages of Littleport, Soham and Isleham. With the planned growth of Ely and these towns, traffic is identified to increase until 2031 with an even greater usage through the Queen Adelaide crossings.

All those I have consulted since the Survey and whose views are expressed within this Report have the same view. In agreement with all 5 recommendations, all only support Options 7 or 8 of the traffic study (Recommendation d) that there is a road bridge solution and that a comprehensive road solution must be found that meets the needs of all Cambridgeshire residents and in particular the communities of Queen Adelaide, Prickwillow and Ely.

The **City of Ely Council at their Full Council meeting** on the 5th February 2018, passed a resolution to not support any proposals in relation to the proposed Queen Adelaide crossing closures that would damage or blight the lives of our residents in Queen Adelaide, Prickwillow and the City of Ely. There must not be any economic or social impact on these parishioners.

The Council strongly supports a road solution to overcome this issue and would urge for options 7 or 8 (*) to be the proposed options.

Comments from Councillors from Isleham state that Fen villages like Isleham do not have secondary schools, hospitals, more than one shop, or many workplaces, and have no rail and very limited bus services. For a village like Isleham to be viable, residents need to be able to access jobs, schools and services in places like Ely by road in private vehicles.

As the 2020 study before the Committee shows, a large number of people are using the Ely Road through Queen Adelaide to do that. A significant proportion of the 1500-1800-plus daily vehicle movements in each direction coming from Prickwillow towards Ely and back again recorded at the East ATC in the study (page 18) will have started in Isleham. East Cambridgeshire's draft local plan envisages that number growing significantly, as Figure 2 in the study shows, in part as a result of proposed new housing in Isleham.

The alternative route from Isleham to Ely is longer, and involves accessing the A142 at a crossroads on East Fen. This is a dangerous junction, which will get busier should the several developments planned for Soham go ahead, while the access roads across East Fen are in bad repair. Nor is it obvious that further pressure should be put on the A142. Diverting a large number of peak-time vehicle movements onto that road at that junction would not be a good idea.

It is therefore important to Isleham residents, and to current users of the A142 including Soham residents, to try and keep the Ely Road at Queen Adelaide fully open to traffic if the rail junction is developed. Since the Ely North Junction project is still being scoped and its budget developed, any and every option for keeping a road open at Queen Adelaide is worth exploring at this stage.

Littleport Councillors confirm that the road along the riverbank and through Queen Adelaide is much the quickest and easiest route for access to Sainsbury/Aldi/Waitrose and for Ely City Centre and the Waterside. It is also the main thoroughfare for employees working in Ely.

Soham Councillors state that to impact and isolate so many by a non road outcome to the raise issues simply has to be a non option! There is a County Highways commitment to improve the Isleham to Prickwillow Road this year, which will encourage even more use of this route into Ely and beyond. On behalf of users of this route from wherever they are, for whatever, reason, a road solution will be the obvious and needed outcome.

In summary, we note from the Recommendations on the Survey that any option taken forward by CCC and Network Rail requires a provision for local residents and businesses, due to the location of the area and the increase in journey time. We are also in agreement that our favoured options are Options 7 and 8 and not Option 2.

Cambridgeshire County Council's logo represents, I have been told, the land and water of the Fen landscape. I would ask the Committee to take the decision, please, that recognises the travel and economic needs of all our towns and villages, and in particular, the communities of Queen Adelaide, Prickwillow and Ely and safeguards their future viability, by exploring options 7 and 8 which would keep this road open. These solutions to be implemented prior to any adjustments to the existing level crossing arrangements at the Peterborough, Kings Lynn, or Norwich lines.

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