

A14 Local Network Issues

To: Highways & Transport Committee

Meeting Date: 27 July 2021

From: Steve Cox, Executive Director: Place & Economy.

Electoral division(s): All

Key decision: No

Forward Plan ref: N/A

Outcome: Members are updated on the local issues associated with the A14 Huntingdon to Cambridge scheme being delivered by Highways England (HE) and discussion on progress on their resolution with a HE representative. Approval of proposed changes to the access control barriers on the two bridges at Bar Hill and Swavesey.

Recommendation: It is recommended that the Committee:

- a) Note the current issues and progress with their resolution; and
- b) Approve the proposed changes to the access barriers currently installed on the Non-Motorised User (NMU) bridges at Bar Hill and Swavesey junctions outlined in section 4.0 of this report.

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1. Background

- 1.1 The A14 Huntingdon to Cambridge scheme was fully opened to traffic in May 2020 and, whilst it is yet to experience normal traffic volumes due to the Covid-19 pandemic, has provided a significant improvement to the strategic road network between Cambridge and the A1.
- 1.2 The project was delivered by Highways England through a Development Consent Order (DCO) approved in 2016. This is the required route for nationally significant infrastructure projects and provided Highways England with the powers to construct the project.
- 1.3 Whilst the scheme has seen improvements to the strategic network, it also delivered additional highway assets for the County Council to adopt as highway authority. These included side roads junctions, a 10 km local access road between Huntingdon Road and Swavesey and numerous non-motorised user routes. Whilst the bridge structures themselves over the A14 are not adopted by the County Council, the approach embankments and carriageway surfacing over the structures is adopted and will be the County Council's responsibility to maintain.
- 1.4 More significant changes are also still being implemented in Huntingdon, following the removal of the old A14 viaduct over the east coast mainline railway. These changes will also be adopted by the County Council.
- 1.5 In total just over 30km of new carriageway will be adopted by the County Council as a result of the works.
- 1.6 The creation of a new bypass to the south of Huntingdon for the A14 route has led to the old route between Swavesey and the A1 being reclassified as the A1307. This will also be detrunked and become the responsibility of the County Council to operate and maintain.
- 1.7 The contract to deliver the A14 project was awarded by Highways England to four contractors that became an integrated delivery team (A14 IDT) with Highways England as the integrated client.
- 1.8 The County Council has a legal agreement with Highways England that provides the terms and framework under which the agreed assets are being delivered by Highways England and its designers and contractors.
- 1.9 A report outlining general progress with the project and current local issues was presented to this Committee in March 2021. It was subsequently agreed that a Highways England representative would be invited to the next Committee meeting to discuss the issues and provide an update on progress.

2. Main Issues

2.1 Current local issues

- 2.2 A scheme of the scale of the A14 was expected to have a significant positive impact on the local road network along the corridor, mainly through a reduction in diverting traffic that should remain on the strategic network, but there is always the risk that some impacts are not predicted or expected prior to completion.
- 2.3 Highways England (HE) complete a post opening performance evaluation (POPE), usually 12 months after completion, but the Covid-19 pandemic has delayed that based on the reduced traffic volumes. There is therefore the opportunity for issues to be raised with HE and investigated through this process.
- 2.4. Local Members have been contacted along the route and there are three main areas of concern with regard to traffic volumes or types of traffic.
- 2.5. The B1043 between the Alconbury junction on the A1 and Alconbury Weald has seen a considerable increase in Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) traffic. This is thought to be due to the A14 moving to the south of Huntingdon leading to traffic wanting to head east on the A14 now using the A1 from Alconbury Weald.
- 2.6. Meetings have already taken place with the divisional county councillor, HE and Urban and Civic, the Alconbury Weald developer. Improvements to HGV signage to utilise the A1307 and A141 will be delivered by HE and a HGV Covenant is also planned between the local parish councils and businesses on the Alconbury Weald site to seek agreement to use this alternative route using the 'A' road network. Damage to properties on the Lordsway Park from debris and undesirable litter thrown from vehicles continues to cause significant issues for residents.
- 2.7. There have also been issues reported to councillors with regard to higher volumes of traffic using the A1123 between Huntingdon and St Ives, as well as the B1040 through Hilton, particularly HGV's in the case of the A1123. High volumes using routes through Huntingdon itself have also been reported since the new Pathfinder Link road was opened, although this will hopefully change once the other links in Huntingdon are opened up. These issues have been reported to HE for further investigation and again should be considered as part of its post opening project evaluation.
- 2.8. There are concerns over the lack of provision of a safe crossing point of the A1307 (old A14) between the New Barnes Lane and Cambridge road Fen Drayton junctions. There is an existing gap in the central reservation and, whilst the volume of traffic has reduced significantly there remains a local concern over this crossing. A new non-motorised user (NMU) route has also been provided on the Fen Drayton side that provides a link through to Cambridge. This crossing may therefore become more attractive in the future.
- 2.9 A Highways England designated funds application for a bridge has previously been unsuccessful at this location, due to the relatively small number of users versus the high cost of a bridge not creating a feasible business case. A safety audit of the new NMU route has recently been completed, which considered the safety of this crossing. This recommended that signage be erected on the approach warning drivers of the potential for

pedestrians crossing. Despite this recommended minor improvement, the lack of provision of a formal crossing point remains a key concern and further discussions on this issue will need to take place with Highways England as part of the detrunking process for the old A14 now A1307.

- 2.10. The impact of the scheme on the village of Dry Drayton has also been raised and the expectation that an impact assessment will be carried out each year for a period of 5 years. This was also linked to the decision of whether to close The Avenue link from the new A1307 into Madingley village, an ambition of residents in the village. The consideration of the outcome of this assessment will inform any future closure of The Avenue.
- 2.11. The monitoring of traffic levels after construction is a general requirement of the legal agreement between the County Council and HE for the scheme as a whole, with defined monitoring points along the corridor that were baselined prior to construction of the scheme. Should any impacts be found that are greater than expected then HE will be required to look at ways to mitigate them.
- 2.12 There are local concerns over the properties at Bar Hill adjacent to the A14, formally a hotel and filling station which are now uninhabited, having lost access from the A14, and are now owned by Highways England. Disposal of these properties is being progressed by Highways England. Developing an alternative access if not purchased by the immediately adjacent local company will be challenging. Creating a better amenity for the village is therefore a key concern for the local community.
- 2.13 Local concerns have been expressed over the lack of engagement in the changes to the location of the uncontrolled crossing point of the non-motorised user route at the junction of Saxon Way and Crafts Way in Bar Hill. This crossing point was identified in the Development Consent Order (DCO), but the subsequent detailed design process led to the need for this crossing to be located further away from the roundabout and the reduction of the number of lanes to be crossed on safety grounds. The traffic modelling completed as part of the DCO identified this arm of the roundabout as being under capacity and able to therefore facilitate this reduction in approach lanes. This change was not communicated effectively by Highways England to the local community and lessons must be learnt for future engagement on similar matters associated with the A428.
- 2.14 There are some significant environmental health concerns that have been expressed by residents of communities living close to the A14 at and between junctions 32 (Histon) and 33 (Milton). The details of these noise, air quality and landscape concerns have been forwarded to Highways England and County Council officers will support their District Council colleagues to work through these issues and ensure that they are given due consideration and incorporated into the POPE report.

Highways England Post Opening Performance Evaluation (POPE)

- 2.15 The Post Opening Performance Evaluation (POPE) will follow an established Highways England methodology, using GPS data, which will look at trends and traffic growth, journey times, journey reliability, not along the route of the main scheme, but more widely, including in neighbouring villages. It will also use that information to do an assessment of noise, greenhouse gases and air quality of the scheme and assess that against what was

predicted in the Full Business Case.

- 2.16 Because of the scale of the scheme and the elements of the POPE, it will also use a bespoke methodology to look at other elements including social value, including upskilling communities, supporting business and investing in communities. Highways England is able to do more on this than on a conventional road scheme because of the opportunity offered by the scale of the investment. It will also look at the customer experience and provide information for a case study on the new DfT tool to evaluate economic impact known as EPIRE, which includes looking at how many jobs were created. It will also consider the biodiversity and environmental impacts. These impacts will also be revisited in five years' time to monitor progress.
- 2.17 Highways England plan to engage with local authorities on the report and its outcomes to inform its approach to future schemes including the A428 improvements. From a traffic perspective GPS data will inform where there have been negative and positive impacts. Biodiversity will also be checked to see how landscaping and trees are faring.
- 2.18 Outcomes, unexpected or otherwise, that differ from the expected outcomes of the scheme will be addressed through engagement with local authorities on route strategies. This will help shape future investment in Roads Investment Strategies beyond 2025.
- 2.19 The completion of the POPE report has been delayed because of the change in traffic levels caused by Covid-19. It will now begin in March 2022 and take an estimated six months to complete. The report will be published as soon as possible on completion.

3.0 Damage to the local road network

- 3.1. During the construction of the new sections of the A14, there was a significant amount of disruption, which is to be expected for a project of this size on the highway network. This included many closures with associated diversion routes.
- 3.2. Whilst these diversion routes utilised the strategic route network wherever possible, there were a few circumstances when this was not possible, and the local highway network had to be used.
- 3.3. However, the greater concern has been the volume and type of traffic that attempted to avoid the strategic diversion routes by using local roads along the A14 corridor. Many of these roads are unclassified and were unsuitable, particularly for use by HGV's that regularly avoided the night-time closure diversions. There were also some challenges with the signing for diversions that saw improvements over time.
- 3.4. This caused significant disruption for some communities living along the corridor and has also left a lasting negative legacy, as the condition of many of these roads has deteriorated significantly due to this unsuitable volume and type of traffic.
- 3.5. Local Members and Parish Councils have highlighted the areas of concern and a list of roads is included in appendix A to this report.

- 3.6. The County Council has been working closely with HE over this issue and, despite initial positive signs that some work could be funded by HE, it has been confirmed that this is now not possible.
- 3.7. Both the County Council and HE subsequently raised the issue with the Department for Transport (DfT) and, whilst receiving an initial positive response that funding may be able to be made available, the DfT have not yet been able to establish any available funding.

4.0 Swavesey and Bar Hill NMU Crossing Cycle Barriers

- 4.1 As part of the final stage 3 safety audits completed by HE on the two large non-motorised user bridges at Swavesey and Bar Hill an issue was raised with the potential risk of conflict between vulnerable users and cyclists on the approach ramps. The proximity of the carriageway at the bottom of these relatively steep ramps was also a concern.
- 4.2 In response to this, HE in consultation with County Council introduced staggered barriers at the bottom of all four ramps in a bid to reduce this risk. However, whilst the design of the spacing of these barriers was subject to a technical review for a wide range of users, such as mobility scooters, wheelchairs, tandems and cycle trailers, concerns over potential issues for users using larger disability cycles or cargo bikes have been expressed.
- 4.3 Whilst the County Council has already adopted the approach ramps as part of the adoption process for new A14 assets, it has however procured an independent review of these barriers and the risks raised by the original road safety audit conducted by HE.
- 4.4 The report is attached in appendix B of this report, which recommends removal of three of the four barriers and replacement with a centralised bollard, needed to protect the bridge structures from general vehicular access. The fourth barrier location on the northern side of the Swavesey bridge, where the risk of uncontrolled entry to the carriageway is highest, is recommended to be retained and the spacing between the barriers extended to guarantee access of all users.
- 4.5 These removable bollards will be designed to minimise impact on general users of the ramps and be clearly visible with retroreflective markings and white lining on either approach.
- 4.6 The three local divisional County Councillors have been consulted on these proposals and have all shown clear support for the removal of the barriers based on feedback from the local communities they represent. There was also a desire to see the barrier removed from the north side of the Swavesey crossing, despite the report advising against this. Alternative options to protect the risk of cyclists inadvertently entering the live carriageway have therefore been investigated. The proposal is to install pedestrian guardrail adjacent to the carriageway kerb across the end of the off ramp, thereby protecting cyclists from entering the carriageway, allowing the access control barrier to be removed and replaced with a removable bollard as at the other three locations.
- 4.7 The Cambridge Cycle Campaign (CamCycle) has also been consulted and it also supports the complete removal of the barriers and measures that have been proposed. Further engagement will take place with CamCycle on the detailed design and layout of the

removable bollards at the four locations prior to installation, the pedestrian guardrail and the other minor signing and lining measures suggested in the road safety audit report and WSP independent report.

- 4.8 Subject to approval by this Committee, these works would be carried out by the County Council at an estimated cost of £5,000.

Local Transport Note 1/20 – Cycle Infrastructure Design

- 4.9 Local transport notes (LTNs) issued by the DfT summarise the latest and most important ideas about traffic management issues and provide guidance for local authorities.
- 4.10 This LTN provides guidance to local authorities on delivery of high-quality cycle infrastructure and was released in July 2020, applying to all new infrastructure designed from that point onwards.
- 4.11 Local authorities are responsible for setting design standards for their roads. This national guidance provides a recommended basis for those standards and there is an expectation that local authorities will demonstrate that they have given due consideration to this guidance when designing new cycling schemes and, in particular, when applying for Government funding that includes cycle infrastructure. It still gives local authorities flexibility on design of infrastructure but sets an objective and measurable quality threshold.
- 4.12 An expectation was therefore placed on the County Council from July 2020 for it to consider LTN1/20 guidance in the design of all changes associated with highway improvements, new highway construction and new or improved cycle facilities, including those on other rights of way such as bridleways and routes within public open space.
- 4.13 One of the summary principles within the guidance is that access control measures, such as chicane barriers and dismount signs, should not be used. They reduce the usability of a route for everyone and may exclude people riding nonstandard cycles and cargo bikes. They reduce the capacity of a route as well as the directness and comfort. Schemes should not be designed in such a way that access controls, obstructions and barriers are even necessary; pedestrians and cyclists should be kept separate with clear, delineated routes.
- 4.14 The design of the Swavesey and Bar Hill NMU bridges was carried by Highways England prior to the release of the LTN1/20 guidance and the above principle was not therefore considered as part of the design process. The layout and gradient of the approach ramp at the Swavesey north location has led to challenges that ultimately led to access controls being recommended on safety grounds as an outcome from two independent reviews.
- 4.15 This highlights that the LTN1/20 guidance cannot always be adhered to, particularly when applied to existing infrastructure that was not informed by it. This will be the case in many instances for schemes constructed within the existing public highway, where there are many constraints for designers. A balance therefore has to be struck and the reasons for not being able to comply with standards or guidance documented. We are however pleased to report in this instance that an alternative design has been proposed that will fully comply with the guidance set out in LTN1/20.

5.0 A14 Lessons Learnt

- 5.1 There are clearly a number of lessons to be learnt from this extremely large infrastructure scheme and numerous sessions have already taken place between Highways England, the A14 Integrated Delivery Team and County Council Officers. The outcome of these sessions has been documented and is now being used to inform the A428 project and the Development Consent Order (DCO) process that is now underway.
- 5.2 The County Council has also worked with Highways England to support the arrangement of a session with Parish Council's and District and County Councillors along the route. This will be scheduled in the coming months and will again be valuable in informing the development and delivery of the A428 scheme.

6.0 A14 Parish Council Legacy Funded Projects

- 6.1 There still appears to be some delay in completing these projects being expressed by local Parish Councils and County Councillors are attempting to support them. An update has been requested from Highways England on all Parish Council projects to include County Councillors.

7. Alignment with corporate priorities

- 7.1 Communities at the heart of everything we do
There are no significant implications for this priority.

- 7.2 A good quality of life for everyone

The escalation of local issues to Highways England for resolution will support the best quality of life for all living along the A14 corridor.

- 7.3 Helping our children learn, develop and live life to the full
There are no significant implications for this priority.

- 7.4 Cambridgeshire: a well-connected, safe, clean, green environment
There are no significant implications for this priority, however the proposed changes to the NMU bridges will help to strike the right balance between safety and ease of access via low carbon transport modes.

- 7.5 Protecting and caring for those who need us
There are no significant implications for this priority.

8. Significant Implications

- 8.1 Resource Implications
This report outlines the issues associated with the damage to the network and other local network issues, a further report will be presented to Committee later this year, which will set

out the details of the detrunking process related to the old sections of the A14, agreement of the detrunking date and estimated ongoing maintenance costs.

- 8.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications
There are no significant implications within this category.
- 8.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications
There are no significant implications within this category.
- 8.4 Equality and Diversity Implications
An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been completed in relation to the proposed changes to the barriers on the approach ramps to the two structures at Bar Hill and Swavesey. This assessment can be found in Appendix C of this report.
- 8.5 Engagement and Communications Implications
There are no significant implications within this category.
- 8.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement
There are no significant implications within this category.
- 8.7 Public Health Implications
The noise and air quality concerns raised by residents will be reviewed by Highways England, County Council officers and District Council colleagues with findings incorporated into the POPE report, which will also assess against the noise and air quality of the scheme predicted in the Full Business Case.
- 8.8 Environment and Climate Change Implications on Priority Areas
- 8.8.1 Implication 1: Energy efficient, low carbon buildings.
Positive/neutral/negative Status: Neutral
Explanation: Report is an update only no decision required
- 8.8.2 Implication 2: Low carbon transport.
Positive/neutral/negative Status: Neutral
Explanation: On balance this is a neutral position, however the recommended changes to the NMU bridges will enable easier access to the route for a wider range of low carbon transport users.
- 8.8.3 Implication 3: Green spaces, peatland, afforestation, habitats and land management.
Positive/neutral/negative Status: Neutral
Explanation: Report is an update only no decision required
- 8.8.4 Implication 4: Waste Management and Tackling Plastic Pollution.
Positive/neutral/negative Status: Neutral
Explanation: Report is an update only no decision required
- 8.8.5 Implication 5: Water use, availability and management:
Positive/neutral/negative Status: Neutral
Explanation: Report is an update only no decision required
- 8.8.6 Implication 6: Air Pollution.

Positive/neutral/negative Status: Neutral
Explanation: Report is an update only no decision required

8.8.7 Implication 7: Resilience of our services and infrastructure and supporting vulnerable people to cope with climate change.

Positive/neutral/negative Status: Neutral
Explanation: Report is an update only no decision required

Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance? Yes
Name of Financial Officer: David Parcell (on behalf of Sarah Heywood)

Have the procurement/contractual/ Council Contract Procedure Rules implications been cleared by the LGSS Head of Procurement? Yes
Name of Officer: Henry Swan

Has the impact on statutory, legal and risk implications been cleared by the Council's Monitoring Officer or LGSS Law? Yes
Name of Legal Officer: Fiona McMillan

Have the equality and diversity implications been cleared by your Service Contact? Yes
Name of Officer: Jenni Bartlett (on behalf of Elsa Evans)

Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications? Yes
Name of Officer: Sarah Silk

Have any localism and Local Member involvement issues been cleared by your Service Contact? Yes
Name of Officer: Andy Preston

Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health? Yes
Name of Officer: Iain Green

If a Key decision, have any Environment and Climate Change implications been cleared by the Climate Change Officer? Yes
Name of Officer: Emily Bolton

9. Source documents

9.1 Source documents

List of damaged local network roads – Appendix A
WSP Independent review report – Appendix B
Equality Impact Assessment – Appendix C