

A1421 Traffic Management and Road Safety Options

To: Highways and Transport Committee

Meeting Date: 23 July 2024

From: Executive Director of Place and Sustainability

Electoral division(s): Sutton, Haddenham

Key decision: No

Executive Summary: This paper responds to the motion agreed at Full Council in October 2023 in relation to the A1421

Recommendation: The committee is recommended to:

- a) Note the options set out in this report for the A1421, including declassification;
- b) Note progress made on International Road Assessment Programme analysis; and
- c) Note the options for traffic calming measures set out in paragraph 3.8 of this report.

Officer contact:

Name: Sonia Hansen

Post: Traffic Manager

Email: Sonia.hansen@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Name: Simon Burgin

Post: Road Safety Manager

Email: Simon.Burgin@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

1. Creating a greener, fairer, and more caring Cambridgeshire

- 1.1 The proposals in this report are aligned with the Council's Strategic Framework Ambition 2 (travel across the county is safer and more environmentally sustainable), as it seeks to consider options to address safety concerns relating to the A1421, between the A1123 in Haddenham to the A141 at Witcham Toll.

2. Background

- 2.1 On 17 October 2023, Full Council approved an altered motion from Councillor Hunt which related to the A1421 that runs from Haddenham to Witcham Toll, raising concerns about safety and the volume of Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) using the route to avoid congestion on the A10 and A142 at Ely.
- 2.2 As part of the Vision Zero project, all 'A' roads in the County are being assessed and graded for safety using the International Road Assessment Programme (IRAP) system.
- 2.3 Full Council agreed to accelerate the IRAP analysis and include the A1421 in the first tranche. It also agreed that a report should be presented to the Highways and Transport Committee to evaluate options to reduce traffic and traffic speeds, improve road safety, and increase options for active travel on the A1421 including, but not limited, to the reclassification of the A1421 from A to B status.
- 2.4 An earlier motion from Councillor Hunt, requesting the re-classification of the A1123 and A1421 from 'A' Road to 'B' road status, was agreed by Full Council in December 2020. However when it was considered by the Highways and Transport Committee in July 2021, it was agreed not to progress the proposal to declassify the A1123 and A1421 at that time, but to carry out further consultation, analysis and discussion with communities and to keep the route and safety record under review.
- 2.5 Sustrans, a walking, wheeling and cycling charity, carried out a feasibility study into the potential for walking and cycling routes between Haddenham and the A142 in 2022. The outcome of this study is discussed in section 3 of this report.

The Council's Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) Policy

- 2.6 The Council's HGV Policy was approved by the Committee in October 2022, and it sets out the Council's approach to managing HGV movements across the county. It gives details on how community groups can take action to address concerns with HGV movements and how to apply for weight restrictions.
- 2.7 The policy includes an advisory freight route map, which sets out routes across the county which are advised for use by HGVs and are generally considered to be more suited to larger vehicle movements. These are not mandatory routes, but the map can be used by transport planners to agree routing plans for businesses and development sites.

Progress since December 2020

- 2.8 A new 20mph scheme was implemented in Haddenham in early 2023, which included a section of the A1421 Station Road. Data from the Speed Indicator Device (SID) managed by the parish council has demonstrated that vehicle speeds have reduced in general, although feedback from the parish council is that there are still approximately 8,000 vehicles a week recorded on the SID travelling over 24 mph through the village along the A1421 Station Road.
- 2.9 Haddenham Parish Council has a successful Lorry Watch scheme in operation and has built up strong relationships with local hauliers, with which it has agreements in place to stop their vehicles using the A1421 as a cut through. The hauliers that have signed up to these agreements include Mick George, Turners of Soham and Thalia Waste Management.

3. Main Issues

International Road Assessment Programme (IRAP) analysis

- 3.1 The IRAP is still progressing, and the final report will be published in June 2024. There have been significant delays to the scanning and recording of data due to the inclement weather in the spring, and access to 'free flow' traffic due to the amount of road works on the 'A' Road network. It is not possible to progress the A1421 as a single package without incurring significant programme costs.

Active Travel

- 3.2 A detailed options appraisal was carried out by Sustrans on several active travel options to improve active travel between Haddenham and Witchford. It sets out the considerable design constraints and projected costs. The favoured option came out in the report as option 4, which was edge of Haddenham to edge Sutton Road, Witchford. This includes creating new paths along footpaths and field edges and by ways. There are significant projected costs and although there is currently no funding set aside for this scheme, it has been included within Cambridgeshire's Active Travel Strategy and is designated as a Tier 2 scheme under the County's Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan. This reflects the desire to increase active travel options within the area.

Declassification from 'A' Road to 'B' Road

- 3.3 It is unlikely the downgrading of a road from 'A' to 'B' road status will alone make any significant difference in the number of HGVs choosing to use the route. Sat Nav algorithms generally do not differentiate between 'A' and 'B' roads, but will choose the quickest or shortest route. If the downgrade of the A1421 to a 'B' road status were approved, changes would be required to the road signage and the national streets gazetteer.
- 3.4 There would be a budgetary impact to the Council in downgrading the A1421 from 'A' to 'B' road status. This impact would be from a reduction in the Department for Transport (DfT) annual grant sent to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA). The grant provided to the CPCA by DfT is split between the Council and Peterborough City Council in agreed proportions based on road lengths and categories of road. The reduction

in grant per annum would be in-perpetuity. It is estimated that there would also be a one-off cost of about £3,000 to replace or amend signage.

Environmental Weight Limit

- 3.5 Haddenham Parish Council is considering applying for an environmental weight limit for the A1421. It has been following the guidance in the Council's HGV policy and had some notable success with agreements with local hauliers to avoid use of the A1421. However, the parish council is still concerned about HGVs travelling through the village, particularly as there is a narrow pinch point on Station Road with a narrow footway, which is a busy pedestrian route for children walking to school.
- 3.6 The A1421 is currently on the advisory freight route map and would require removal from this to be considered for a weight limit. This change can be made by the Service Director, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Highways and Transport Committee.

Traffic Calming

- 3.7 Officers met with Councillor Hunt, the Police Traffic Management Officer and Haddenham Parish Council on 15 April 2024 to discuss their road safety concerns, speeding and the process for restricting HGV movement. A site visit with Councillor Hunt, the parish council and a Projects Team and Road Safety Engineer is scheduled for 26 July 2024, to advise on options for traffic calming and speed reduction. Options discussed at the meeting will include physical measures, such as give-way features and road markings.
- 3.8 Potential physical traffic calming measures could include raised features, such as speed cushions or raised tables, build outs or pinch points however any proposal would be subject to further discussion with local stakeholders, wider consultation, and detailed design work.

4. Alternative Options Considered

- 4.1 The alternative option to downgrading the A1421 from 'A' Road to 'B' Road status would be to retain the A1421 as an 'A' Road, whilst continuing to support the Parish Council in their endeavours to reduce the impact of HGV movements on the A1421.

5. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

- 5.1 Declassifying the A1421 from A to B road status alone would not necessarily have the desired impact of traffic calming and would impact negatively on the Council's highways maintenance budget, as set out in paragraph 3.4. For this reason, it is not recommended to progress declassifying the road at this time, but to allow time for the further development and implementation of traffic calming measures.

6. Significant Implications

- 6.1 Finance Implications
The financial implications from the declassification are set out in paragraph 3.4.

6.2 Legal Implications

The downgrade process would have to be followed in-line with the regulations set out by the Department for Transport.

6.3 Risk Implications

There is a risk that there will be a reduction in maintenance funding for highways maintenance and limited benefits from the downgrade proposal in isolation.

There is a risk that it would set a precedent and encourage other communities to request a downgrade in road category leading to further reductions in income for highways maintenance.

6.4 Equality and Diversity Implications

A completed Equality, Impact Assessment (EqIA) form is attached at Appendix 1. Traffic calming measures should have a positive impact on vulnerable groups such as older people and disabled people.

7. Source Documents

7.1 [Agenda Item No. 4 \(A1123 & A1421 Reclassification to 'B' Road Status\), Highways and Transport Committee meeting on 27 July 2021](#)

7.2 [The Council's HGV Policy](#)

7.3 [Sustrans Feasibility Study – Haddenham to A142](#)

7.4 [Cambridgeshire Insight Data for Haddenham](#)