

**Report To:** Greater Cambridge City Deal Executive Board 3 November 2015

**Lead Officer:** Graham Hughes, Executive Director of Economy, Transport and Environment, Cambridgeshire County Council

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## **Histon Road Bus Priority, Walking and Cycling Measures: Approval to Consult**

### **Purpose**

- 1 This report sets out a range of measures which have emerged from an initial technical study of Histon Road. The report explains the background to this development work and seeks approval to carry out a public consultation on these measures to inform the development of preferred proposals.
- 2 The City Deal Executive Board determined that the Histon Road project will be delivered as part of the Tranche 1 infrastructure programme. The project covers the length of Histon Road from the A14 interchange south to and including the junction with Huntingdon Road/Victoria Road.
- 3 This project supports the City Deal priority of achieving efficient and reliable movement between key existing and future housing and employment sites.
- 4 A consultation strategy is appended to this paper. It is proposed to undertake consultation concurrent with that for a similar scheme for Milton Road as there are expected to be links and dependencies between the two projects. Following the consultation a preferred set of measures (potentially with options) will be worked up in more detail and a full business case presented for approval, subject to further consultation.

### **Recommendations**

- 5 The Executive Board is recommended to:
  - a. Note the findings from the initial assessment and technical study;
  - b. Approve public consultation on the illustrative measures as set out in this report and as shown on the accompanying plans; and
  - c. Agree to receive a report on consultation in the spring of 2016 on a preferred set of measures.

### **Reasons for Recommendations**

- 6 Histon Road is a high priority scheme for the City Deal programme and a key proposal within the Local Transport Plan 2011-2026. Technical work has identified various options that are proposed for public consultation. The consultation will help with the selection of a preferred set of measures for detailed development.

## Background

### Key objectives

- 7 The project has the following key objectives, (in no particular order):
- a) Comprehensive priority for buses in both directions wherever practicable;
  - b) Additional capacity for sustainable trips to employment/education sites;
  - c) Increased bus patronage and new services;
  - d) Safer and more convenient routes for cycling and walking, segregated where practical and possible;
  - e) Maintain or reduce general traffic levels; and
  - f) Enhance the environment, streetscape and air quality.

### Development

- 8 **Figure 1** indicates the length of Histon Road under consideration and shows its setting in a wider context. Future planned developments at Northstowe, Waterbeach Barracks and the NIAB site are expected to have significant implications for transport along Histon Road.

**Figure 1: Histon Road in the wider area context**



- 9 Histon Road is one of the key radials into Cambridge and is identified as an increasingly important public transport corridor as part of the Transport Strategy for Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire (TSCSC) and Long Term Transport Strategy (LTTS). It suffers from congestion at peak times and bus reliability is poor.

- 10 A new access road is proposed between Huntingdon Road and Histon Road to serve the NIAB site development although this is unlikely to be open to traffic until 2020 at the earliest (see **Fig. 1**).
- 11 Taking into account planned growth in the Greater Cambridge area up to 2031, it is estimated that the number of buses using the Histon Road corridor is likely to double during peak periods.
- 12 A similar project is being developed for Milton Road (See Agenda Item No. 6(b)). Initially, the project development timetables will run concurrently to allow any traffic displacement or project dependencies to be explored in a joined up way. However, the construction phases will be staggered to minimise any impacts on the road network in the north of the city.

### **Considerations**

- 13 An initial budget estimate of £4.28 million was set for the Histon Road project by the City Deal Board when the first tranche of projects was approved.
- 14 The assessment work to date is in line with the Department for Transport technical scheme appraisal methodology (known as WebTAG). This approach:
- Allows for clearly unfeasible options to be sifted out at an early stage;
  - Allows for early public consultation;
  - Avoids abortive work on detailed design for proposals which are clearly unacceptable;
  - Provides robust basis for identification of preferred option;
  - Ensures that the shortlisted schemes are all potentially deliverable from a technical perspective

### **Options assessment**

- 15 Histon Road is not wide enough to accommodate all the measures needed to fully meet all the objectives set out above. The desirable widths for each element of the highway cross section to achieve segregation of pedestrians, cyclists, buses and general traffic are tabulated below; but as these cannot all be accommodated it has been necessary to select those that best meet the project objectives within the space available. Some relatively modest areas of land outside the highway have been identified that could be procured to help towards achieving the desired measures. Existing junction layouts and methods of control have been reviewed in the context of the project objectives. From this process two sets of proposals have been developed ('Do maximum' and 'Do something') to provide options for public consultation.

#### **Desirable minimum widths**

Footway: 2 metres	Bus lane: 3 metres
Cycleway: 2 metres	Traffic lane: 3 metres

#### **'Do Maximum' and 'Do something'**

- 16 Two sets of options have been developed to illustrate the range of measures that could be implemented. The consultation responses will help to shape the preferred option, which could be a combination of the measures in these two illustrative options. **Appendix 1** summarises the measures in terms of sustainable transport modes and junctions. Plans illustrating the options are available within the background technical report at: <http://www.gccitydeal.co.uk/citydeal/info/2/transport/1/transport/8>

- 17 As implied, the 'Do maximum' measures aim to provide the maximum benefit in terms of the project objectives but they would have significant impacts on the public realm and local access. They would provide high quality, segregated and continuous bus and cycling infrastructure throughout and improved crossing facilities for pedestrians. Journey times and service reliability would improve considerably for buses, key factors in making buses more attractive to potential users. Cycling journey times would become more reliable and, equally important; the road environment for cycling would be enhanced through segregated facilities. Cycling would become a more pleasant and less stressful experience, factors which are known to encourage more people to cycle. Segregation would also improve the experience for pedestrians.
- 18 The 'Do something' option offers less overall benefit for bus movements although journey time and reliability would still improve over that experienced now. The level of improvement for cycling and walking would be similar to the 'Do Maximum' option. Overall the impact on the public realm would be reduced although a considerable number of highway trees would still be removed.
- 19 Both options would include the provision of early bus detection, linked to the real time passenger information system (RTPI) at all signal controlled junctions to prioritise bus movements at times when required. Other work would be undertaken to upgrade signals equipment to provide a consistent signalling regime along the whole route.

#### Costs

- 20 At this stage of project development it is difficult to give an idea of the cost of delivering each set of proposals but an initial assessment based solely on typical engineering costs suggests that both options could exceed the initial project budget estimate and additional funding could be required. A full assessment would need to factor in the additional costs associated with, amongst other things, land purchase, compensation claims and the relocation of public utility apparatus which are expected to be significant.
- 21 It may be necessary to select an appropriate mix of measures to deliver the most cost effective and efficient solution and it is recommended that the selection of a set of measures to form a 'preferred scheme' is best undertaken in light of feedback from an initial public consultation. Contributions will be sought towards the funding of the measures from any developments whose impact the proposed scheme helps to mitigate.

#### Traffic modelling

- 22 Modelling work is in hand to assess the likely outcomes from the measures including journey times and the relocation of traffic which will help inform public consultation. It is anticipated that this work would be completed by mid-October.

#### **Key emerging issues**

- 23 Ahead of consultation some key issues are emerging that are brought to the Executive Board's attention.

#### Highway trees and verges

- 24 The measures indicated in the 'Do maximum' option will have a substantial impact on highway trees. Some opportunities for new highway landscaping will arise from both sets of proposals but there will be limited space for new tree planting on the section where trees are removed under the 'Do maximum' measures although other locations for new tree planting will be considered including outside the highway. A tree condition survey is being undertaken which will help inform future consultation.

### Public realm

- 25 The City Deal has identified the potential to invest in public realm improvements as part of project delivery and an assessment of project proposals needs to take into account the impact on the public realm and engineering solutions need to be informed by landscape and urban design advice. Achieving the right mix of transport benefits, public realm enhancements and mitigation measures will be an important focus for public consultation.

### Parking and servicing

- 26 Both options will impact on current highway parking and consideration will need to be given to how any displacement of parked vehicles might be managed. The measures would also have implications for servicing and deliveries and it is expected that existing parking restrictions would need to be revised to better manage these operational aspects. Public consultation will help inform this process.

### Displaced traffic

- 27 Some of the measures set out would have the potential to impact on traffic conditions on the neighbouring side road network and it may prove necessary to widen the scope of the scheme to provide mitigation measures on some side roads, where appropriate. The changes proposed at the Victoria Road/Huntingdon Road junction would displace a significant amount of traffic onto other routes, notably Castle Street and Chesterton Lane/Chesterton Road and other measures may be required to mitigate this potential project impact.

### Bus stops

- 28 Whilst the use of floating bus stops to avoid cyclists overtaking buses is not explicit in the plans, calls for their inclusion are expected. The opportunity to provide this type of bus stop layout will be explored at public consultation although it is unlikely that adequate room will exist at many bus stop locations. The experience gained from the floating buses stops recently constructed along Huntingdon Road and Hills Road will help inform this process.

### Land acquisition

- 29 The 'Do maximum' option indicates where land could be acquired to accommodate the maximum achievable priority, although the areas are relatively modest. Land acquisition through a compulsory purchase order (CPO) would have implications for the delivery timetable.

## **Consultation and Engagement**

- 30 **Appendix 2** sets out a process for a first round of public consultation which consists of the following main elements:
- Joint process covering both the Milton Road and Histon Road project measures
  - Key stakeholder briefing sessions, staffed public exhibitions at key venues primarily in the north of the city and at Park & Ride sites, local member engagement, wider member briefings and project information made available at community venues, on relevant bus services and at Park & Ride sites
  - A focus on encouraging on-line response to facilitate a more cost and time effective exercise.

## **Programme**

- 31 **Appendix 3** sets out a tentative project timeline, which should be taken as indicative at this time given the fact that preferred measures are not yet clear. A more detailed programme will be prepared in light of the preferred measures that emerge from an initial public consultation.

## **Next steps**

- 31 It is recommended that the options set out in this report are put forward for public consultation to inform and influence the selection of individual measures to form a 'preferred scheme' for more detailed development and further public consultation.
- 32 Further work would be undertaken prior to public consultation to build on the technical work undertaken to date. This will provide some indication of the expected effects and outcomes of the various measures, particularly in terms of any traffic / parking displacement and journey times and an initial assessment of a business case. More detailed work is likely to be required in due course for the 'preferred scheme' to facilitate a full business case assessment.

## **Implications**

- 33 In the writing of this report, taking into account financial, legal, staffing, risk management, equality and diversity, climate change, community safety and any other key issues, the following implications have been considered: -

### Financial and other resources

The scheme development and implementation is funded from the City Deal funding stream.

### Legal

No significant legal implications have been identified at this stage although they may emerge as the project moves towards the statutory process stage.

### Staffing

Project management is undertaken by Cambridgeshire County Council's Major Infrastructure Delivery Team. All schemes are worked up in collaboration with the District Councils.

### Risk Management

A full project risk register forms part of the Project Plan.

### Climate Change and Environmental

The proposed measures have the potential to reduce congestion and improve air quality in the longer term through encouraging a shift towards sustainable transport modes.

### Consultation responses and Communication

No formal consultation has been undertaken to date although an informal drop-in session was held in June to give key stakeholders an opportunity to raise issues of concern associated with the route to inform the process of identifying possible measures. Subject to Executive Board approval, further work will be undertaken in November and early December to prepare more detail for a public consultation, which would commence before the end of the year. This report sets out a plan for future public consultation.

### Community Safety

Some of the options set out in this report will help reduce road casualties on Histon Road and improve road safety.

## **Background Papers**

No further background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

Report Author: Richard Preston, Project Manager, Highway Projects, Major Infrastructure Delivery Team, CCC

Email: [Richard.preston@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:Richard.preston@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)

Telephone: 01223 743701

## APPENDIX 1: SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

	'Do maximum'	'Do something'
Bus	Inbound bus lane between King's Hedges Road and Gilbert Road	Inbound bus lane between King's Hedges Road and Roseford Road Inbound bus lane between Carisbrooke Road and Gilbert Road
	Early bus detection on all approaches to signal controlled junctions	
	Some bus stops relocated	
Cycling	Continuous segregated inbound cycle lane from King's Hedges Road junction through to Victoria Road junction	Inbound and outbound advisory cycle lanes between Victoria Road junction and Rackham Close junction area
	Continuous segregated outbound cycle lane from Rackham Close to King's Hedges Road junction	Continuous segregated inbound and outbound cycle lanes between Rackham Close area and Gilbert road junction
		Outbound mandatory cycle lane from Gilbert Road to Carisbrooke Road Inbound mandatory cycle lane from Carisbrooke Road to Gilbert Close
	Floating bus stops where space permits	
Walking	Raised crossing points across side roads	
	Upgraded footway surfaces throughout	
Junctions	Prohibition of right turn into Warwick Road	
	Prohibition of entry to Victoria Road except for buses and cycling Prohibition of right turn from Victoria Road into Histon Road except buses and cycling	



## **APPENDIX 2: SUMMARY OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

### **AIMS**

To:

- Engage with key stakeholders, the public and all interested parties in the consultation on proposals for bus priority, walking and cycling improvements.
- Ensure that messages reach the widest audiences, that all voices are heard and that channels are enabled for excellent 2-way communications.
- Provide unbiased, appropriate, timely, and clear information in plain English on the proposed options for the corridors.

### **ENGAGEMENT**

Public Consultation to run from mid-January until late February, consisting of the following main elements:

- Briefings for local representatives including parish councils and residents' associations
- Briefings for relevant City Council Area Committees
- Briefings for key stakeholders including transport interest groups, disability groups and businesses
- Press release/social media/web presence using [www.greatercambridgecitydeal.co.uk](http://www.greatercambridgecitydeal.co.uk)
- On-line questionnaire/survey
- Staffed public exhibitions at venues in proximity to both corridor areas and at Milton, Babraham, Longstanton and St. Ives Park & Ride sites
- Information displays in shelters at bus stops along both corridors
- Direct mail/e-mail
- Information in libraries, GP surgeries and other places of interest with passing trade
- Work with local schools and colleges

Post-consultation

- Analyse results
- Provide consultation outcomes through website, press release, direct mail/e-mail, local newsletters and magazines, social media.
- Bring a report back to the Executive Board to select preferred measures.

### **KEY MESSAGES**

The key messages for the Histon Road and Milton Road corridors will be layered over the background of the vision for the Greater Cambridge City Deal as a whole. The vision will be strong part of the consultation information so that people know how this project fits with other priorities for the City Deal:

- Greater Cambridge City Deal (GCCD) brings together 5 organisations in a ground-breaking new partnership to create the conditions necessary to unlock the potential of Greater Cambridge.
- The City Deal aims to secure hundreds of millions of pounds of additional funding for investment in transport infrastructure to support high quality economic and housing growth over the coming decades. £100m of funding will be made available in the five years from April 2015. If certain conditions are met, we will be able to secure up to a further £200m from April 2020 onwards and up to a final £200m from April 2025 onwards.
- Significant new investment for transport infrastructure will be brought to the area through the Greater Cambridge City Deal. Funding will be used to make it easier to get to work, and to move between the business and research centres. More sustainable transport methods will be prioritised by increasing road space for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users and enabling more people to use public transport for at least some of their journey.

- The City Deal will aim to deliver the development strategy for Greater Cambridge contained in the submitted Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire Local Plans and the supporting transport infrastructure identified in the Transport Strategy for Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire.
- The City Deal will provide a huge boost for the local economy, and will kick start development and the creation of jobs by significantly improving accessibility and journey times.
- Histon Road and Milton Road bus priority aims to deliver high quality passenger transport, in terms of reliability, frequency and speed, complemented with good quality cycling and pedestrian facilities.
- The consultation is the start of the delivery process and there will be further opportunities to comment as the project is taken forward.

#### ON-LINE QUESTIONNAIRE/SURVEY

A questionnaire will be provided for each corridor which will seek views for respondents using a sliding scale of support to assess how well each project objective is being met. This will inform a future process to bring together the best combination of measures as a coherent preferred option for each route.

#### STAKEHOLDERS

The consultation will seek to ensure that all users of Histon Road and Milton Road have the opportunity to have their say. Whilst the use of on-line techniques will be the main focus for responding, the consultation process will need to be sufficiently flexible to respond to the needs of those with disabilities.

## APPENDIX 3: TENTATIVE PROJECT TIME-LINE

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