

Report To: Greater Cambridge Partnership Joint Assembly

27th February 2019

Lead Officer: Peter Blake, Director of Transport

A10 FOXTON LEVEL CROSSING BYPASS AND PARKING AT FOXTON RAIL STATION

1. Purpose

- 1.1. This report sets out the review work undertaken on the Foxton Level Crossing and rail parking options in the vicinity of Foxton station.
- 1.2. The Executive Board agreed in February 2018 to a review of the Network Rail GRIP 2 work undertaken on the Foxton Level Crossing and further work to be undertaken towards the development of 'Outline Business Case' for a preferred option for a bypass of the crossing and the exploration of the opportunity for Foxton Station to act as a Transport Hub with a Park and Rail facility for onward rail trips into Cambridge and Cambridge North stations, and the proposed, future Cambridge South station.
- 1.3. Reducing journey time delays and promoting local rail services supports the Greater Cambridge Partnerships (GCP) vision of creating better, greener transport networks, connecting people to homes, jobs and study, and supporting economic growth.
- 1.4. The Joint Assembly is asked to comment on the report. The Executive Board will be asked to approve the final scheme design.

2. Key Issues and Considerations

Background

- 2.1 The A10 south is currently heavily congested during the peak hours and the level crossing causes a significant delay to private vehicles commuting onwards to Cambridge. Delay, caused by the down time of the rail barrier, at the level crossing in the peak hour can be between 15 – 20 mins. Further services on the rail line stopping and passing through Foxton station are proposed by Network Rail and this will result in further delay at the level crossing.
- 2.2 Cambridge has seen above national average growth in rail passengers over the past decade including along the Cambridge line between Royston and Cambridge. With 62% growth at Cambridge station and 47% at Foxton, demand is continuing to grow on the rail network. Foxton Station currently has no private vehicle car parking and there is observed fly parking in the village using the rail line to commute into Cambridge and London.

- 2.3 The A10 currently takes around 16,000 vehicles per 12-hour period in the Foxton area. The presence of a full barrier level crossing significantly limits the capacity of the route. Currently the Shepreth Branch line typically takes four trains an hour in each direction, one or two which stop at Foxton. The spacing of trains and volume of traffic means that queues do not always have the opportunity to clear the level crossing in peak periods.
- 2.4 Growth in traffic volumes forecast and the increase in service's using the Kings Cross line, stopping or passing through Foxton, will result in an increase delay and congestion at Foxton level crossing. Additional planned trains and the potential for East – West Rail, including expanding the rail line, could further impact upon journey times and reliability of the route.
- 2.5 The Foxton crossing had previously been developed to GRIP 2 stage which established the scope of the scheme and confirmed feasible options for the route. The Executive Board agreed to develop this work to further explore the case for removing the level crossing.

Traffic Volume Projections

- 2.6 Traffic growth across South Cambridgeshire is forecast to increase generally by almost 40% in the morning peak by 2031, meaning time spent in congestion will more than double.
- 2.7 On the A10 in the Foxton area, traffic flows are predicted to rise between 23% (TEMPRO growth) and 40% (wider South Cambridgeshire peak hour growth) to a total of up to 22,000 vehicle movements over a 24 hour period by 2031 with the removal of the level crossing. This growth will impact upon local communities and the wider transport network with careful management and mitigation.

3. Review of Scheme – Costs and Benefits

Foxton Level Crossing

- 3.1 The Options Assessment for the removal of the level crossing involved scoring eight bypass options each against a range of Strategic, Economic, Financial, Commercial and Management evaluation criteria taken from the DfT WebTAG Business Case Themes. To support the assessment process, high level desktop studies of current ecology, landscape/heritage value, geotechnical and air quality assessments, within the alignment areas of the eight bypass route options, were undertaken.
- 3.2 Of the eight bypass route alignment options assessed, four received a positive assessment score and are recommended for further development and assessment, as illustrated in Figure 2 below. All four route alignment options would require further appraisal for provision of either an overbridge or underbridge infrastructure.
- 3.3 Assessed alignment options of Foxton level crossing bypass can be seen in Figure 2. The range of costs reported for the options are between £15,500,000 and £40,000,000 but vary significantly as some options involve bridges or underpasses. In general terms an underpass is a more expensive option. The BCR of the medium Option (Option 4), without a footbridge, has a BCR of 1.76. This reflects as a 'Medium Value for Money' (VfM) category using Department for Transport criterion.

which include options with and without the level crossing bypass, the Foxton Park and Rail Transport Hub scheme has a BCR above 2 falling into a 'High value for money' category using Department for Transport criterion.

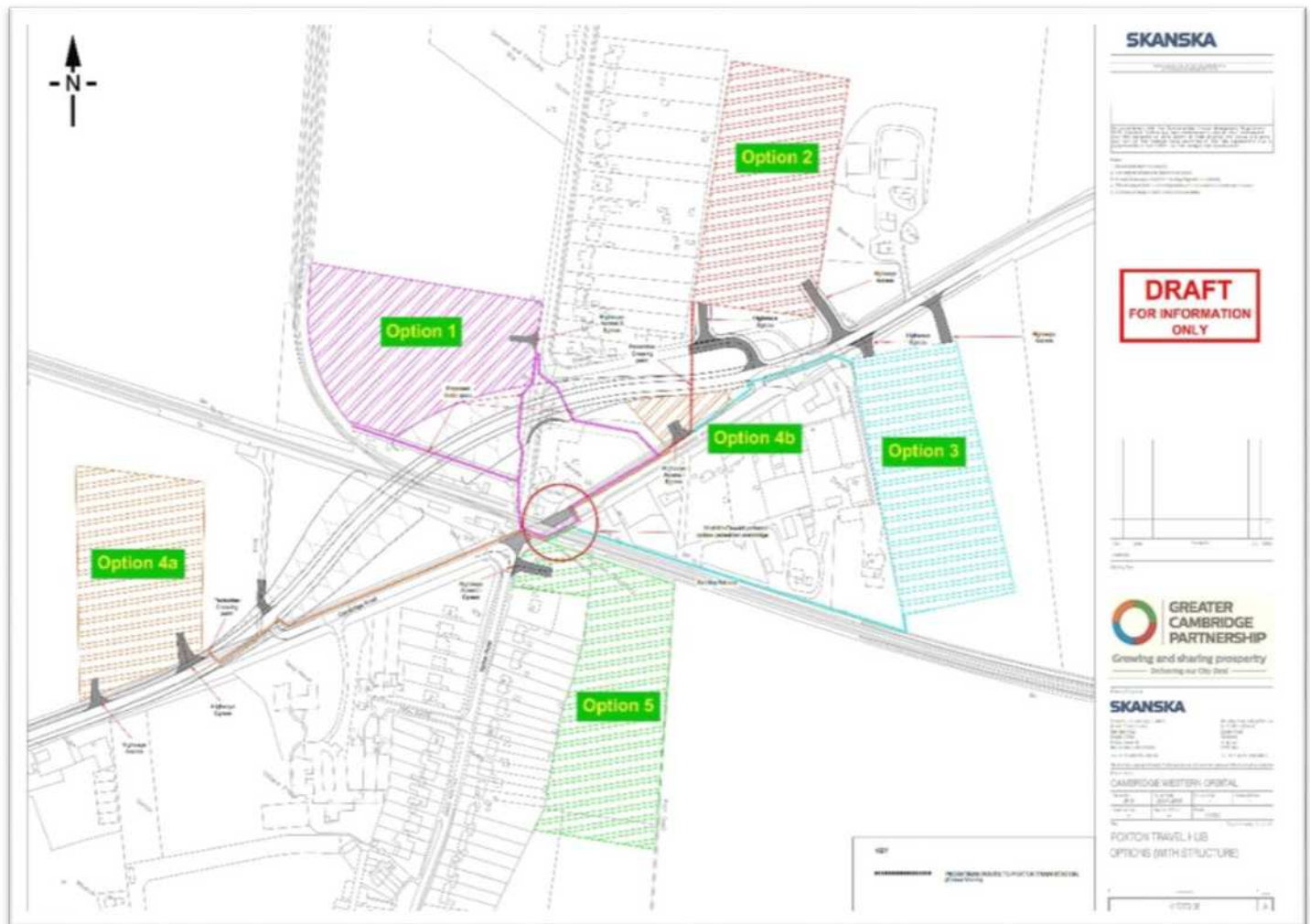


Figure 3: Foxton Park and Rail options with Level Crossing Bypass

4 Emerging Recommendations

- 4.1 The Foxton bypass scheme and the Foxton Park and Rail Transport Hub proposal share commonalities with regard to scheme objectives, potential site locations and access to the Park and Rail site. However, neither scheme is reliant on the other being delivered; both schemes can be delivered independently.

Foxton Station Parking

- 4.2 The provision of a Park and ride Transport Hub along the A10 Royston to Cambridge corridor is ideally positioned to improve access to new employment sites in Cambridge from the corridor's villages and towns. The scheme supports the Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) aims and objectives of enhancing levels of public transport connectivity into and across Cambridge, and has a high level of synergy with other proposed schemes including the M11 Park and Ride scheme and Cambridge South station. Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire Local Plan and **North Hertfordshire's** draft Local Plan show a significant level

of growth on the A10 corridor and the provides a sustainable mode of transport for onward travel to the Cambridge Southern Fringe, Cambridge Northern Fringe or Cambridge City Centre, for people who would otherwise travel by private car. This is aligned with the GCP aims and objectives. The scheme has the potential to reduce congestion and enhance journey time reliability.

Foxton Level Crossing

- 4.3 The Foxton level crossing bypass scheme has the potential to improve both journey time reliability and the connectivity of the A10 corridor. However, removing the level crossing will significantly increase the volumes of traffic along the route which, if not effectively managed, will impact significantly upon local communities and the wider highway network.
- 4.4 Removing the level crossing in isolation would therefore compound the traffic situation locally for little gain across the wider network which would not support the Partnership's vision for a creating better, greener transport networks, connecting people to homes, jobs and study, and supporting economic growth. The business case work to date also supports delivery of a bridge, rather than a tunnel, which has less support in the local community.
- 4.5 The scheme to remove the level crossing should therefore be considered alongside wider improvements to the A10 and discussions should be undertaken with the Combined Authority, as the strategic transport authority for the area, on next steps.

5.0 Next Steps and Milestones

- 5.1 The report is to brief members on the emerging outputs of the review work undertaken on Foxton Level Crossing and Parking at Foxton Station.
- 5.2 Discussions should take place with the Combined Authority on developing proposals for removing the level crossing in the context of a wider A10 review. The Executive Board will be asked to consider the next steps on developing parking at Foxton Station and whether a public consultation over the summer as part of a process to develop an Outline Business Case is appropriate.

Source Documents

Foxton Park and Rail SOBC
Foxton Level Crossing SOBC