

**Report To:** Strategic Planning and Transportation  
Portfolio Holder  
**Lead Officer:** Director, Planning and New Communities

27 May 2015

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## **A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon improvement Scheme Development Consent Order Application – Local Impact Report, Statement of Common Ground and Written Representation**

### **Purpose**

1. To agree the response to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) in relation to Highways England's (formerly known as the Highways Agency) Development Consent Order (DCO) application for the A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon improvement scheme.
2. This is not a key decision because the Council is not the decision making authority.

### **Recommendations**

3. It is recommended that the Portfolio Holder:
  - i. Note the Highways England responses to previous comments made by the Council to the draft scheme, provided in the Consultation Report (part of Highways England's Development Consent Order (DCO) application), provided in Appendix 1.
  - ii. Approve the Joint Local Impact Report (in Appendix 2) to be submitted to the DCO Examination.
  - iii. Approve the Written Representation (in Appendix 3) to be submitted to the DCO Examination.
  - iv. Delegate authority to the Director of Planning and New Communities to make further technical amendments in consultation with the Strategic Planning and Transportation Portfolio Holder.
  - v. Delegate authority to the Director of Planning and New Communities to prepare a Statement of Common Ground, in consultation with the Strategic Planning and Transportation Portfolio Holder.

### **Reasons for Recommendations**

4. Improvements to the A14 are important for the delivery of the growth agenda, the economy, and to improve journey times and road safety for the travelling public. The road has a significant impact on the environment and economy of the district. The Council has a duty, as a Tier 1 authority, to be involved in the process for determining the Development Consent Order application.

### **Executive Summary**

5. The A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon improvement scheme is classed as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP). To build the scheme, Highways England (HE) must obtain consent by submitting a DCO application to the Secretary of State; this application was made on 31 December 2014. The Council has a duty to be involved in the process for determining the DCO application and has, to date,

submitted an Adequacy of Consultation report and Relevant Representation to the Planning Inspectorate.

6. As part of the examination process the Council is required to submit a Local Impact Report (a factual document that sets out the local policy context and impacts of the scheme) A joint Local Impact Report has been prepared with Cambridgeshire County Council, Huntingdonshire District Council and Cambridge City Council. The Council previously submitted a Relevant Representation, a short statement which outlined the Council's support for the scheme in principle and identified a number of matters of detail still to be addressed. There is now the opportunity to submit a Written Representation (a written statement making points of support or objection, and supporting information to justify the position). A Written Representation has been prepared reinforcing the Council's support for the scheme in principle, and elaborating on outstanding matters to be resolved through detailed design and/or points where further clarification is required. This report seeks approval of both documents for submission to the DCO examination.
7. The Council is also encouraged to submit a Statement of Common Ground with HE. As this is a technical document (outlining areas of agreement, disagreement and matters still under discussion) delegated approval is sought to prepare it in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.

### **Background**

8. The A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon improvement scheme is classed as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP). To build the scheme, Highways England (HE) must obtain consent by submitting a DCO application to the Secretary of State. A Development Consent Order application for the A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon was made on 31 December 2014. The A14 improvement scheme as submitted in the DCO application comprises:
  - Improvements to the Cambridge Northern Bypass
  - Widening the carriageway on the A14 between Girton and Swavesey
  - A new local access road between Girton and Swavesey
  - A new bypass to the south of Huntingdon and Godmanchester (the old road between Swavesey and Ellington will be de-trunked)
  - Removal of the road viaduct over the railway at Huntingdon
  - Changes to the local road connections within Huntingdon town centre
  - Widening a section of the A1 between Brampton and Alconbury.
9. As a key stakeholder and statutory consultee, the Council is required to respond at key stages. Key stages in the Planning Act 2008, as amended by the Localism Act 2011 are:

**Pre-application** – Between notifying PINS and submitting the DCO application, HE were required to carry out extensive consultation on their proposals. As well as ongoing Stakeholder engagement, there were two consultation stages; an informal consultation between 9 September and 13 October 2013, to which the Council's response was agreed by Cabinet on 4 October 2013. Following this, pre-application consultation was undertaken between 7 April and 15 June 2014. South

Cambridgeshire District Council made representations, agreed by Cabinet on 8 May 2014. In general the Council supported the need for the scheme, the chosen route alignment and provision of a local access road (with separate non-motorised user route alongside), and raised some concerns about matters of detail.

**Acceptance** – Once HE submitted their DCO application (31 December 2014) PINS had 28 days during which to decide whether or not to accept the application for examination. The Council was asked, in January 2015, to submit a statement on the Adequacy of Consultation to assist PINS in reaching a view. This was agreed by the Portfolio Holder on 12 December 2014. PINS accepted the application on 27 January 2015.

**Pre-examination** – Period during which individuals registered their interest in taking part in the examination and they could submit a Relevant Representation. Everyone registering their interest is invited to attend a Preliminary Meeting run and chaired by an Inspector. The Council submitted a Relevant Representation (a short statement to provide the Inspector with an indication of the issues the Council may have concerns about) in March 2015, agreed by the Portfolio Holder on 9 March 2015.

Reflecting the Pre-Application Response, the Council's Relevant Representation indicated that the Council supported the principle of the scheme, and advised that upgrades are urgently needed. A number of matters of detail were still to be addressed, and these were being explored with Highways England.

**Examination** – Starts with the Preliminary Meeting on 13 May 2015 and must be concluded within 6 months. Anyone that registered their interest (submitted a relevant representation) is invited to make more detailed Written Representation and/or attend hearing sessions if any are required.

The Preliminary Meeting was held on 13 May 2015. Attached to the notification letter is a draft timetable for the examination (included for information in Appendix 4), which will take place in the summer/autumn of 2015 and concludes on 13 November 2015.

**Decision** – PINS must report their recommendations within 3 months from the 6 month examination period. The Secretary of State then has 3 months to make a decision on whether to grant or refuse development consent.

**Post Decision** – Once the Secretary of State's decision has been issued there is a 6 week period during which the decision may be challenged in the High Court.

### **The examination process**

10. Through the DCO process the Council is required to submit a Local Impact Report (LIR). This is a factual document that sets out the local policy context and the impacts (positive, negative and neutral) of the scheme, from the point of view of the Tier 1 authorities. A joint LIR has been prepared with Cambridgeshire County Council, Huntingdonshire District Council and Cambridge City Council.
11. The Council has until 15 June to submit the LIR, and to make a Written Representation on the DCO. During the Examination stage there is the opportunity for the Council to actively participate, by means of appearance at hearings.

## Considerations

12. As a key stakeholder and a statutory consultee, the Council is required to respond at key stages in the DCO process. The Council's Relevant Representation reserved the Council's position to address a number of topic areas in more detail during the examination. The Council is now required to submit a Statement of Common Ground, LIR and Written Representation to PINS to assist the examination process.

### *Responses to previous comments by the Council on the A14 Scheme*

13. The DCO application is accompanied by a Statement of Consultation. This explains the consultation that was undertaken during preparation of the scheme. It also includes responses to the issues raised during the consultation. Appendix 1 of this report includes an extract of responses to comments from South Cambridgeshire District Council. It highlights that a number of issues raised by the Council have been addressed.

### *Statement of Common Ground (SoCG)*

14. Throughout the process, particularly in the lead up to submission of the DCO application, officers have been working with HE to address the concerns the Council raised in representations to the draft scheme in the Spring 2014. The submitted DCO application includes a number of changes, some of which address these earlier concerns.
15. The Council is encouraged to prepare a Statement of Common Ground with HE, to assist the examination process by identifying to the inspector where issues raised have been addressed to the satisfaction of the Council, or where there remains outstanding issues. This process has been commenced, and additional issues will be added if the Council raises further issues in its representations. It will evolve as the Examination progresses, particularly if HE resolve outstanding issues to the satisfaction of the Council such that they can be moved into common ground.
16. Delegated Authority is sought to prepare this document, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.

### *Local Impact Report*

17. Joint work on the LIR has demonstrated that some of the Council's initial concerns raised to the draft scheme in 2014 have been addressed. However, it has also raised some new issues.
18. The draft LIR is appended to this report for agreement (Appendix 2).
19. As the LIR is being produced jointly with three other local authorities, each will need to approve the report through their own internal processes. As a result, it is possible that further amendments may need to be incorporated before the LIR is submitted to PINS. Therefore delegated approval is sought to make any such technical amendments as the need arises (Recommendation iv).
20. Officers have been working to assess the scheme and likely implications and whether the mitigation measures proposed are adequate. The LIR in Appendix 2 provides more details on the expected impacts. Overall it is considered that the scheme delivers significant benefits, and where there are adverse impacts, mitigation or

compensation are proposed to address issues where this is possible. In a number of areas, some small-scale design changes have been proposed or further supporting information or mitigation measures are being sought.

#### *Written Representation*

21. In order to comment on the DCO application the Council will need to submit a written statement to the Examination, making points of support or objection, and supporting information to justify the position.
22. A draft Written Representation is appended in Appendix 3 for agreement. A summary of the issues is included below.

#### *Summary of the Draft Written Representation*

- The Need for the Scheme

South Cambridgeshire District Council supports the A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon Improvement scheme in principle. Improvements are needed as soon as possible to this critical piece of infrastructure to support growth.

- The Proposed Route

The Council supports the route, including the inclusion of a Local Access Road, and rejection of strategic alternatives.

The Council previously commented that HE should consider additional movements at the Girton Interchange, and if not part of this scheme the Route Based Strategy for the A428 should be brought forward urgently. HE advised these would be matters for an A428 Route Based Strategy, and not part of this A14 scheme. Highways England state that they continue to review the operation of the trunk road network through its route-based strategy studies and will target future improvements where need is greatest.

Upgrades to the A428 Caxton to A1, and an A428 'Expressway' scheme are included in the DFT Road Investment Strategy 2014. This should be used as an opportunity to explore and address these issues, and the Council will have an opportunity to pursue the issues through these processes.

The traffic modelling indicates that inclusion of west facing slip roads at the new junction with the A1198 draws traffic away from more minor village routes, and should be included.

- Provision for Non-Motorised Users (NMU)

Responding to issues previously raised by the Council, the Scheme commits to providing a NMU route along the LAR built to current best practice standards – this will be 3m wide between Fenstanton and Dry Drayton and 4m between Dry Drayton and A1307 Huntingdon Road, Cambridge. A verge will provide separation between the LAR and A14. The proposed route has been modified and improved in places and now links to Fenstanton, routes to Northstowe and north west Cambridge. These measures are supported, although there are some issues that could still be improved in the final design. Measures to address other routes,

including the reinstatement of routes previously severed by the original A14, are supported.

- Policy Context and Planned Development

The Transport Assessment and modelling work undertaken has accounted for planned growth sites, including Northstowe. The Bar Hill junction will now be constructed to serve Phases 1 and 2. The scheme includes 'passive provision' to accommodate the remainder of the development; the bridge at Bar Hill will be oversized, to enable future capacity to be added to accommodate Phase 3. This approach is supported.

Drainage arrangements around the development between Huntingdon Road and Histon Road (Darwin Green) have also been resolved, such that a pond is no longer proposed in the development area.

- Landscape Impacts

Whilst landscape mitigation will help restore the landscape fabric, there are areas where some additional landscaping is needed, for example to mitigate the impacts on All Saints Church, Lolworth (Grade II\* Listed) and around new structures, such as gantries and bridges.

- Artificial lighting

Whilst the DCO includes an assessment of and mitigation for the impacts of lighting on landscape, flora and fauna, the Council is seeking clarification and further information on the potential impact on people and living conditions.

- Cultural Heritage

The Council is assured that appropriate surveying and assessment will be undertaken of the Listed milestones along the existing A14, and that these will be reinstated appropriately, close to their original location. As detailed above, further work is needed to address the impacts on the setting of Lolworth Church.

- Ecology

The Council supports the approach undertaken in utilising the 'avoidance of impact' as the first principle of mitigation. The scheme will provide a net gain in habitat which should benefit ecology and there will be no impact on designated sites within South Cambridgeshire.

- Noise

The scheme will improve the noise environment for many properties, particularly along the mainline between Girton and Swavesey. However, the Council is exploring whether a few properties, which are likely to continue to experience a high level of noise, can be appropriately mitigated. The Council is seeking clarification whether the Orchard Park noise barrier is fit for purpose and, if necessary, will be replaced. There are further technical issues on which clarification is being sought and others that will be addressed through the detailed design, such as the design and materials for noise barriers, with which the Council will want to be involved.

- Air quality

The Council is supportive that the scheme should meet the objectives of the joint Air Quality Action Plan and improve air quality. However, the Council is in discussion with HE about moving the monitoring station at Impington and seeking appropriate reimbursement of costs. The Council is also seeking clarification of the proposed post-scheme monitoring, including agreement of an appropriate baseline for future monitoring of PM<sub>10</sub> at Impington.

- Flooding and Drainage

The Scheme includes appropriate measures to address its impact on flood risk however, opportunities to help mitigate existing flood risk as part of the legacy of the scheme have not been taken.

- Minerals & Waste and Borrow pits

The Council is supportive of the principle of including borrow pits within the scheme to source materials locally, and accepts that the borrow pits broadly align with the Cambridgeshire Minerals and Waste Plan. However, the Council is seeking clarification of matters relating to mitigation of operational impacts of borrow pits, to ensure the amenity of local residents, and in relation to the reuse of the borrow pits and ensuring their longer term management.

HE has committed to reusing suitable materials from the development sites, including Northstowe, wherever possible. This will reduce the volume of materials to be brought in from further afield.

- Transport Assessment

Whilst the traffic model is very comprehensive, a number of technical points are being worked through responding to comments raised by the County Council. As a result, additional supplementary modelling work is currently being undertaken. The outcome of this work will be submitted to the PINS at a later date as supplementary information. At this stage there is no indication that these issues are significant, but the Council will reserve its position to comment on the detail when it is made available.

- Legacy

The Council notes and welcomes the objectives of HE to provide a long term positive legacy to local communities and businesses. However, the Council is seeking clarification from HE on legacy issues including, but not limited to, the design and quality of Non-motorised user provision and in relation to the restoration of borrow pits.

- Procedural issues

The DCO includes a number of Requirements (similar to planning conditions). The Council is seeking clarification on the Requirements as drafted to ascertain how matters of detailed design will be considered and approved, how the Code of Construction Practice and Local Environmental Management Plans will be agreed and enforced, and seeking more robust requirements consistent with the Councils' planning conditions.

## **Options**

23. It is a requirement that the Council submit a LIR and Written Representation early in the examination to accord with the PINS timetable.

The Portfolio Holder can approve the LIR and Written Representation as contained in Appendices 2 and 3 respectively, or can suggest amendments to either or both of the documents.

## **Implications**

24. 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***

25. The Council has made a financial commitment to the project of £5million. This contribution will be funded from anticipated New Homes Bonus receipts.

### ***Legal***

26. The Council has a role in the Development Consent Order application process to assist the Planning Inspectorate.

### ***Staffing***

27. As there are significant issues for the District, officers will need to continue to be involved during the Examination process.

### ***Risk Management***

28. The A14 scheme is important to the delivery of development in the district, including Northstowe.

### ***Climate Change***

29. There will be an increase in carbon emissions as a result of the highway improvements due to increased speed and travel distances.

## **Consultation responses (including from the Youth Council)**

30. There has been ongoing engagement with HE during development of the scheme. There have been a number of presentations by HE to Members.
31. A number of Council services have been consulted in the preparation of this report, including New Communities and Planning and Environmental Health.

## **Effect on Strategic Aims**

**Aim 2** - We will work with partners to create opportunities for employment, enterprise, education and world-leading innovation

32. Capacity of the A14 is an important issue for the economy of the area, and the delivery of the development strategy for the area.

**Aim 3** - We will make sure that South Cambridgeshire continues to offer an outstanding quality of life for our residents



33. The A14 is a key part of the transport infrastructure of the area, and impacts on quality of life.

### **Appendices**

Appendix 1 - Responses to previous comments made by the Council provided in the Consultation Report

Appendix 2 - Draft Local Impact Report

Appendix 3 - Draft Written Representation

Appendix 4 – Draft A14 Examination Timetable (extract from Preliminary Meeting notification letter)

### **Background Papers**

The A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon improvement scheme Development Consent Order application documents can be found on the Planning Inspectorate's website:

<http://infrastructure.planningportal.gov.uk/projects/eastern/a14-cambridge-to-huntingdon-improvement-scheme/?ipcsection=overview>

Letter from the Planning Inspectorate notifying of the Preliminary Meeting:

<http://infrastructure.planningportal.gov.uk/wp-content/ipc/uploads/projects/TR010018/2.%20Post-Submission/Procedural%20Decisions/Rule%206.pdf>

Strategic Planning and Transportation Portfolio Holder Decision March 2015 on Relevant Representation:

<http://moderngov/mglIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IId=47408&Opt=0>

Strategic Planning and Transportation Portfolio Holder Decision December 2014 on Adequacy of Consultation report:

<http://moderngov/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=9449>

Cabinet 8 May - A14 Improvements - response to Highways Agency consultation:

<http://moderngov/documents/s75631/A14%20consultation%20response.pdf>

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