

1 Introduction

1.1. The Highways Agency

1.1.1. The Highways Agency is an executive agency of the Department for Transport and is responsible for operating, maintaining and improving the strategic road network in England on behalf of the Secretary of State for Transport. The strategic road network in England comprises around 6,920km of motorways and trunk roads.

1.2. The scheme

1.2.1. The scheme comprises:

- widening of the A1 between Brampton and Alconbury over a length of approximately 5.6km (3½ miles) from the existing two lane dual carriageway to a three lane dual carriageway. Between Alconbury and Brampton Hut this would generally be achieved by widening on the east side of the existing road; between Brampton and Brampton Hut a new road would be constructed to the west of the existing A1 which would become the new A1. This would enable the existing carriageway over this length to form part of the new A14 Huntingdon southern bypass. A local access road approximately 2.5km (1.6 miles) would link the Ellington Junction with Woolley Road;
- a new Huntingdon southern bypass of approximately 20km (12½ miles) in length, which would provide a two lane dual carriageway between Ellington and the A1 at Brampton and a three lane dual carriageway between Brampton and Swavesey. The new bypass would cross over the Great Ouse river and the East Coast mainline railway. It would include junctions with the A1 at Brampton and with the A1198 at Godmanchester;
- downgrading the existing A14 trunk road (de-trunking to county road status) over approximately 21km (13 miles) between Brampton Hut and Swavesey, as well as between Alconbury and Spittals interchange;
- Huntingdon town centre improvements, to include the closure and demolition of the A14 viaduct over the East Coast mainline railway and Brampton Road in Huntingdon. A new link road would be constructed to improve accessibility into Huntingdon from the south and east by connecting the old A14 directly with Huntingdon ring road near the bus station and by constructing a new link road from Brampton Road to connect with the A14 to the west. As such, a through route for light vehicles would be maintained;
- widening of the existing A14 over approximately 7.9km (5 miles) to provide three lanes in each direction between Swavesey and Bar Hill and four lanes in each direction between Bar Hill and Girton;
- widening of a 2.5km (1½ mile) section of the Cambridge northern bypass between Histon and Milton;

- improvement of existing A14 junctions at Swavesey, Bar Hill and Girton; to improve the capacity of the road, ensure compatibility with adjacent proposed developments such as Northstowe and provide improved connections for non-motorised users; and
 - a new local access road following the route of the A14 over a distance of approximately 8km (5 miles), including construction of a dual carriageway link between the existing A14 near Fen Drayton and Swavesey junction and a single carriageway between Swavesey and Girton. The road would provide a route for local traffic between Cambridge and Huntingdon as well as providing access to properties and businesses along the corridor.
- 1.2.2. The location and context of the scheme is illustrated on *Figure 1.1*. A more detailed description of the scheme is provided in *Chapter 3 of the Environmental Statement*.
- 1.2.3. The Highways Agency (the applicant) is required to seek authorisation to construct the scheme by means of an application to the Secretary of State through the Planning Inspectorate (the responsible agency) for a Development Consent Order (DCO).
- 1.2.4. If the development consent for the scheme is granted, construction of the main works is expected to commence in 2016 and the new road alignment is programmed for opening by December 2019. Works associated with the demolition of the existing A14 viaduct and provision of new links in Huntingdon town centre would follow opening of the new section of road bypassing Huntingdon and are expected to start in 2020.

1.3. Purpose of the Environmental Statement

- 1.3.1. The *Environmental Statement (ES)* reports the environmental impact assessment (EIA) that has been carried out for the scheme as a statutory requirement. *Council Directive (2011/92/EU) on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment (codification) (EIA Directive)* (European Union, 2011) forms the basis of the legal requirements for EIA and of EIA practice in the UK. The *EIA Directive* is implemented in the UK through separate statutory instruments specific to different consenting regimes.
- 1.3.2. The scheme is classed as a nationally significant infrastructure project (NSIP) under the *Planning Act 2008* because: it involves the construction and improvement of a highway that is wholly within England for which the Secretary of State is the highway authority; and it is likely to have a significant effect on the environment. The EIA has been carried out in accordance with the requirements of the *Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2009, as amended (EIA Regulations)*, which are the relevant EIA regulations for NSIPs.

- 1.3.3. The *ES* is a key part of the application documents submitted by the Highways Agency in support of the DCO application. Its principal purpose is to provide the Planning Inspectorate with enough information about the likely significant effects of the scheme on the environment, to allow a well-informed recommendation to be made to the Secretary of State and to influence the terms of the DCO in relation to environmental matters. The *ES* also provides the same information to other interested parties who wish to participate in the statutory decision-making process.

1.4. Previous EIA documents

Scoping report

- 1.4.1. In developing the proposed scope of assessment for the scheme, consideration was given to: the environmental topics required by *Schedule 4 of the EIA Regulations*; developing practice in the field of EIA; national policy for highway schemes (*Draft National Policy Statement for National Networks* (Department for Transport, December 2013) and Highways Agency guidance for conducting EIAs for highway schemes (*Design Manual for Roads and Bridges, Volume 11* (Highways Agency et al., 1993) and *Interim Advice Note 125/09 Supplementary guidance for users of DMRB Volume 11 'Environmental Assessment'* (Highways Agency, October 2009). Responses from the consultation process for the scheme and discussions with key stakeholders have also been considered in finalising the scope (DCO submission document number 5.1).
- 1.4.2. The *A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon Improvement: Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report* (the scoping report) (Highways Agency, 2014a) was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate in March 2014 in support of a request for an EIA scoping opinion. *Chapter 6* of the *ES* provides details on the scoping process. The topics proposed in the scoping report considered the requirements of guidance set out in *Volume 11 of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB)* (Highways Agency et al., 1993), which provides advice on the identification of potentially significant effects resulting from a highway project. These include:
- air quality;
 - cultural heritage;
 - landscape;
 - nature conservation;
 - geology and soils;
 - material resources;
 - noise and vibration;
 - effects on all travellers;
 - community and private assets;
 - road drainage and the water environment; and
 - cumulative effects and impact interactions.

- 1.4.3. A formal scoping opinion was issued on behalf of the Secretary of State in April 2014. The scoping opinion set no requirement to alter the choice of topics proposed for the EIA, but identified that the main potential issues for the scheme are:
- air quality;
 - noise;
 - nature conservation; and
 - all travellers (Planning Inspectorate, April 2014).

- 1.4.4. A copy of the scoping report and the scoping opinion is available on the National Infrastructure Planning website:

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

Preliminary environmental information report

- 1.4.5. The *A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon improvement scheme Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEI)* (Highways Agency, 2014b) provided an initial statement of the main environmental information available for the study area, along with preliminary descriptions of the likely significant environmental effects and mitigation measures envisaged for the scheme consulted on in spring 2014. This document was intended to give members of the public and consultation bodies an understanding of the key issues and enable them to prepare well-informed responses to the consultation in spring 2014.
- 1.4.6. The *ES* provides more detail than the *PEI*, draws on new information in some areas, and presents the potential impacts and likely significant effects of the scheme (which has been altered to take account of the results of consultation with key stakeholders and the community) based on further detailed assessment. Information on how the scheme design has been developed is set out in *Chapter 3* and *Chapter 4 of the ES*.

1.5. Structure of the Environmental Statement

- 1.5.1. In line with *Volume 11 of the DMRB* (Highways Agency et al., 1993) the *ES* comprises the following elements:
- Environmental Statement main text setting out the environmental assessment in chapters (DCO submission document number 6.1);
 - the Environmental Statement figures, including drawings, photos and other illustrative material (DCO submission document number 6.2);
 - the Environmental Statement technical appendices (DCO submission document number 6.3); and
 - the non-technical summary (DCO submission document number 6.5).

- 1.5.2. A structure for the *ES* was proposed in the scoping report. However, in response to comments received during the scoping consultation, the content of the *ES* has been amended slightly from that initially proposed in the scoping report. The *ES* now includes a chapter on traffic and transport to address comments from Cambridgeshire County Council (*Chapter 7*). A chapter was also added to explain the EIA process (*Chapter 6*). Also included is an appendix summarising likely significant effects on human health (*Appendix 18.1*), and a chapter on environmental management (*Chapter 20*) to define the process of managing environmental issues throughout the design and construction phase of the project and onwards into the long term operational phase.
- 1.5.3. *Table 1.1* sets out the structure of the *ES* and a summary of what is included in each chapter. As far as is practicable, the chapters are written in a non-technical style to make it accessible to a wide, non-specialist audience. Where technical terminology is used, an explanation is provided in the text, in footnotes and/or in the glossary. The *ES* presents an assessment of the likely significant effects of the scheme having taken account of mitigation measures to be included as part of the scheme design. The glossary is found in *Chapter 21*. A non-technical summary of the environmental statement is provided as a separate document within the DCO submission (DCO submission document number 6.5).

Table 1.1: Structure of environmental statement

Chapter	Description
<i>Non-technical summary</i>	
<i>Chapter 0</i>	A summary of the main <i>ES</i> using non-technical language, as a plain document. The provision of a non-technical summary is a statutory requirement of the EIA regulations. A colour version is provided as a separate document (DCO submission document number 6.5)
<i>Environmental statement main text (DCO submission document number. 6.1 – folder no. 10)</i>	
<i>Chapter 1:</i> Introduction	<i>Chapter 1</i> introduces the scheme, the applicant, the purpose of the <i>ES</i> and provides an outline of related documents already produced as part of the EIA process and the structure of the <i>ES</i> .
<i>Chapter 2:</i> Location and context	<i>Chapter 2</i> provides the context of the scheme, relevant designations and sensitive receptors. The chapter identifies and describes the land that could be directly or indirectly affected by the scheme, taking into account associated auxiliary facilities and landscaping areas
<i>Chapter 3:</i> Description of the scheme	<i>Chapter 3</i> explains the elements of the scheme. The description covers land use requirements; site preparation; construction processes and methods; transport routes; gantries, signage and lighting; operational requirements; maintenance activities; and emissions (water, air and soil pollution, noise, vibration and light). An outline of the likely construction phasing and processes, including plans of temporary works, site compounds and permanent and temporary changes to local roads, is also provided.

Chapter	Description
<i>Chapter 4: Main alternatives</i>	<i>Chapter 4</i> explains how the scheme has been developed and provides an outline of the main alternatives considered, including potential design changes suggested during the consultation process.
<i>Chapter 5: Consultation</i>	<i>Chapter 5</i> sets out the consultation process, including early engagement, discussions with the Planning Inspectorate, and ongoing engagement with key stakeholders. It also explains how the wider community consultation for the scheme was carried out during the pre-application period.
<i>Chapter 6: Approach to the EIA</i>	<i>Chapter 6</i> explains the main principles of EIA, the steps in the process, the key terminology in EIA, dealing with uncertainty and how the assessment is presented. <i>Chapter 6</i> also provides information on the scope of assessment.
<i>Chapter 7: Traffic and transport</i>	<i>Chapter 7</i> provides non-technical information on the traffic model used for the assessment and key traffic movements. It provides an explanation of how traffic data is used to inform the EIA.
<i>Chapter 8: Air quality</i>	<p><i>Chapters 8 to 17</i> assess and explain the likely significant effects of the scheme in relation to a series of specialist topics that cover specific aspects of the environment. Each of the chapters includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an executive summary; • an introduction to the subject (including legislation, policy and regulatory framework to the subject); • baseline environmental conditions; • the likely significant adverse or beneficial changes in environmental conditions that could arise from the scheme; • the mitigation measures proposed to avoid or limit changes; and • an assessment of the significant residual effects taking account of the proposed mitigation measures.
<i>Chapter 9: Cultural heritage</i>	
<i>Chapter 10: Landscape</i>	
<i>Chapter 11: Nature conservation</i>	
<i>Chapter 12: Geology and soils</i>	
<i>Chapter 13: Materials</i>	
<i>Chapter 14: Noise and vibration</i>	
<i>Chapter 15: Effects on all travellers</i>	
<i>Chapter 16: Community and private assets</i>	
<i>Chapter 17: Road drainage and the water environment</i>	
<i>Chapter 18: Cumulative effects and impact interactions</i>	

Chapter	Description
<i>Chapter 19:</i> Summary of the environmental impact assessment	<i>Chapter 19</i> sets out a summary of the main findings of the EIA process, including summary tables of the likely significant effects.
<i>Chapter 20:</i> Environmental management	<i>Chapter 20</i> provides information on the processes to be used to ensure the required environmental compliance and mitigation measures are achieved. It also deals with the code of construction practice, environmental management plans and the register of environmental actions and commitments.
<i>Chapter 21:</i> Glossary	A glossary of the key terms and acronyms is provided.
Environmental statement figures (illustrative material) (DCO submission document number 6.2 – folder no. 11)	
Environmental statement technical appendices (DCO submission document number 6.3 – folder nos. 12,13,14)	

1.5.4. Several technical reports and related figures contain information on protected species that is treated as confidential. These are included in the submitted DCO documents as a separate confidential folder, and are available to statutory consultees and other legitimate interested parties as paper copies on request.

1.6. Other assessments

1.6.1. In addition to the main EIA, other forms of environmental assessment were undertaken for the scheme in response to other regulatory or policy requirements. These are described below.

Assessment of implications on European sites (AIES)

1.6.2. An assessment of implications on European sites (AIES) (*Appendix 11.12*) was prepared in line with the requirements of *Council Directive (92/43/EEC) on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (the Habitats Directive)* (European Commission, 1992) and in accordance with Planning Inspectorate guidance (The Infrastructure Planning Commission Advice Note 10, April 2011). The *Habitats Directive* requires the assessment of projects that are likely to have a significant effect on European sites, i.e. sites protected at European level for nature conservation, such as special areas of conservation and special protection areas. A project cannot be consented unless it can show that it would not have an adverse effect on the integrity of European sites or, where there are no alternative solutions, there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest and compensatory measures are secured, to ensure the coherence of the Natura 2000 network. The AIES has shown that the scheme is unlikely to have significant effects on any European sites.

Water Framework Directive assessment

1.6.3. The Environment Agency requires an assessment of the impact of any construction and/or modification to specified water bodies in the UK under

the *Council Directive (2000/60/EC) establishing a framework for the Community action in the field of water policy (Water Framework Directive (WFD))* (European Union, 2000). The primary aim of the directive is to improve and maintain the ecological status and potential of all water bodies. Ecological quality comprises a series of biological, physico-chemical and hydromorphological 'quality elements'. Further information on the WFD process is provided in *Chapter 17*.

- 1.6.4. The scheme would directly modify a number of water bodies through the building of structures such as culverts and outfalls, as well as realignment of some channel reaches. As a consequence, a WFD compliance assessment of the impact of the scheme on the relevant water bodies was carried out and this is reported in *Appendix 17.3*. The report provides the details of a geomorphological survey and WFD compliance assessment of potential effects of the modifications on the relevant water bodies and supports the assessment of road drainage and the water environment set out in *Chapter 17*.

Assessment of health impacts

- 1.6.5. *Appendix 18.1* sets out an assessment of potential impacts on human health. The assessment considers feedback from public consultation and relevant results of the individual environmental topic assessments within the EIA. It considers potential health inequalities as well as aspects of human health that are not easily quantified, recognising that pathways to health impacts are often indirect and vary according to individual circumstances. The purpose of the assessment is to indicate how public health is likely to be affected by the scheme, including information on the recommendations made to improve health outcomes.

Carbon assessment

- 1.6.6. The Highways Agency is committed to contributing to the Government's targets for greenhouse gas emissions reductions. *The Sustainable Development Action Plan (SDAP)* (Sustainable Development Commission, 2007) requires the Highways Agency to report on the carbon footprint from construction, maintenance and network operations. A carbon management and carbon footprint assessment was carried out by the Highways Agency, and is included as *Appendix 13.2*. The assessment presents the carbon footprint baseline for the scheme and outlines recommendations for intervention to reduce carbon emissions.

Flood risk assessment

- 1.6.7. A flood risk assessment (FRA) has been carried out for the scheme and is presented in *Appendix 17.1*. The FRA was developed in accordance with:
- *DMRB Volume 11, Section 3, Part 10, HD45/09 - Road Drainage and the Water Environment* (Highways Agency et al., 2009);
 - *National Planning Policy Framework* (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2012); and
 - *Draft National Policy Statement for National Networks* (Department for Transport, 2013).

- 1.6.8. Where available, the FRA used the latest Environment Agency hydraulic models to assess the impact of the scheme on flood risk. Elsewhere, predicted flood levels were based on flood levels from the Environment Agency or an estimate based on the Environment Agency's published flood zones compared to topographic data.

1.7. What happens next – the statutory process

- 1.7.1. On receipt of the application for a DCO, the Planning Inspectorate has 28 days to determine whether the information submitted with the application meets all the relevant criteria to enable it to be accepted as a valid application.
- 1.7.2. Once the Planning Inspectorate accepts the application, the Highways Agency must publish a notice to inform the public that an application has been made and accepted. This marks the start of the 'pre-examination period'.
- 1.7.3. During the first 28 days of the pre-examination period, third parties (individual members of the public or organisations) can register as interested parties. There is no statutory fixed timescale for the pre-examination period. Registering will entitle third parties to make representations to the Planning Inspectorate about the application and to be involved in the consideration of the application. *The Planning Inspectorate advice note 8.3* explains how to register and become an interested party (The Planning Inspectorate, April 2012)
- 1.7.4. The pre-examination period closes with the 'preliminary meeting', at which all those who have registered as interested parties will be invited to attend. At the preliminary meeting, the Planning Inspectorate will determine the key issues which are affecting the application. This is determined based on the information in the application documents and the representations made to them by registered interested parties.
- 1.7.5. The preliminary meeting marks the start of the 'examination period', during which a series of hearings will take place to address each of the key issues identified during the pre-examination period and at the preliminary meeting. Parties who registered an interest can attend the hearings, make statements and ask questions. These hearings are intended to be collaborative. It is expected that the parties work together to find solutions to the issues raised, rather than for third parties to raise objections for the applicant to deal with (as is commonly the case at public inquiries). The examination period has a fixed maximum duration of six months.
- 1.7.6. At the end of the examination period, the Planning Inspectorate has a period of up to three months to consider its recommendation. The recommendation and a supporting report are passed to the Secretary of State for Transport, who has three months to consider a decision on whether to grant or withhold a DCO. Finally, when the Secretary of State's decision is published, there is a six week high court challenge period. At the end of this period, unless there have been high court challenges, the decision is final.

1.8. Availability of the Environmental Statement

1.8.1. All application documents, including the *ES*, will be published via the Planning Inspectorate's website shortly after the application has been submitted. Application documents can be downloaded free of charge via the following link:

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

1.8.2. Paper copies of the documents will be placed on deposit at several locations in the area surrounding the scheme for the duration of the pre-examination and examination period, and will be available for the public to view, free of charge, at these locations. Details of the locations will be published in advance in the Highways Agency's statutory notice of the submission and acceptance of the application, through advertisements in the Hunts Post and Cambridge Evening News. The locations will include:

- Huntingdon Library;
- St Ives Library;
- Suffolk County Council offices, Endeavour House, Ipswich;
- Northamptonshire County Council offices, County Hall, Northampton;
- Cambridge City Council offices, Regent Street, Cambridge;
- Cambridge Central Library;
- St Neots Library;
- Histon Library;
- Cambourne Library;
- South Cambridgeshire Hall, Cambourne;
- Huntingdonshire District Council offices, Pathfinder House, Huntingdon;
- Bar Hill Library;
- Buckden Library;
- Swavesey Library;
- Papworth Library;
- Huntingdon Town Hall;
- Godmanchester Town Hall;
- St Ives Town Hall; and
- Cambridgeshire Collection, Lion Yard, Cambridge.

1.9. Other regulatory regimes

- 1.9.1. As outlined above, the *ES* is written to inform an application for a DCO. In addition to the application for a DCO, the scheme is subject to a number of other regulatory regimes or consent requirements, including:
- habitat regulations assessment;
 - potential requirement for one or more European protected species licences;
 - a licence under the *Protection of Badgers Act 1992*; and
 - drainage-related consents.
- 1.9.2. The way in which these other regulatory regimes and consent requirements have been, or are to be addressed, is set out in DCO submission document number 3.3, *Consents and Agreements Position Statement*.
- 1.9.3. DCO submission document number 6.4, *Statement Relating to Statutory Nuisances* identifies the matters set out in *Section 79* of the *Environmental Protection Act 1990* in respect of statutory nuisances and considers whether the scheme would engage one or more of those matters. The statement concludes that no statutory nuisance within the terms of *Section 79* is predicted to arise.

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