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**South  
Cambridgeshire**  
District Council

Mr N Coombes  
Case Manager  
The Planning Inspectorate  
3/18 Eagle Wing  
Temple Quay House  
2 The Square  
Bristol  
BS1 6PN

Our ref:  
Your ref: TR010018  
12 January 2015

New Communities and Planning  
Contact: Claire Spencer  
Direct dial: 01954 713418  
Email: [Claire.spencer@scambs.gov.uk](mailto:Claire.spencer@scambs.gov.uk)

Dear Mr Coombes

**Planning Act 2008 (as amended) Section 55 - Adequacy of Consultation request in relation to the application by the Highways Agency for an Order Granting Development Consent for the A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon Improvement Scheme**

In response to your letter of 31 December 2014 requesting the Council's views on the adequacy of consultation undertaken by the Highways Agency on the A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon Improvement Scheme, please find enclosed adequacy of consultation statement from South Cambridgeshire District Council. The Council's statement has been agreed with the Strategic Planning and Transportation Portfolio Holder.

Please note that, should the Planning Inspectorate decide to accept the application for examination, the Council would like to register as an interested party. In the meantime the Council is working with the Highways Agency on a Statement of Common Ground. The Council is also working on a joint Local Impact Report with Cambridgeshire County Council and Huntingdonshire District Council.

Yours sincerely

A black rectangular box redacting the signature of Jo Mills.

**Jo Mills**  
Director - New Communities & Planning

# ADEQUACY OF CONSULTATION STATEMENT SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon project is the largest single road project in the UK. The scale and importance of the scheme, to improve a 21 mile length of trunk road presents a significant local challenge. South Cambridgeshire District Council is supportive of the scheme, but recognises that the project has significant impacts on local communities. As the route passes through South Cambridgeshire, the District Council is also a significant stakeholder in the scheme.
- 1.2 The project is classed as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) and will go through the Development Consent Order (DCO) process under the 2008 Planning Act (the Act). The DCO process places statutory obligations on local authorities to report on the adequacy of consultation by the Applicant (the Highways Agency) before applying for a DCO.
- 1.3 This report is South Cambridgeshire District Council's response to the statutory requirement to advise the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) of the adequacy of consultation by the Highways Agency (the Applicant) in the Pre-Application stage.
- 1.4 The Planning Act 2008 (the Act) contains the following requirements in relation to the pre-application procedure for an order granting development consent:
  - Duty to consult (Section 42 of the Act)
  - Duty to consult the local community (Section 47 of the Act)
  - Duty to publicise (Section 48 of the Act)
- 1.5 Under Section 55 of the Planning Act 2008 local authorities may make representations to the Secretary of State concerning the adequacy of the applicant's consultation, which the Secretary of State must regard. Any such representation must be limited to how the applicant has carried out the consultation and may not be about how the applicant has had regard to responses to the consultation itself.
- 1.6 This report has been developed on the basis of the guidance provided by DCLG on pre-application consultation under the Planning Act 2008.

## 2. Statement of Community Consultation

- 2.1 The Highways Agency produced a Statement of Community Consultation (SOCC). The SOCC identified the Highways Agency's approach to consultation on the proposals for the scheme. South Cambridgeshire District Council was consulted on the content of the Highways Agency's draft SOCC in February 2014.
- 2.2 The Planning Policy and Localism Portfolio Holder agreed the following response to the draft SOCC: *"The approach is comprehensive, providing a range of opportunities to find out more about the proposals. The range of venues for Exhibitions and Materials Deposit Points is extensive, and gives a good coverage of the District and beyond. However, an additional consultation exhibition is requested at Cambourne, in order to ensure full coverage in this part of the district, given the development planned in the area and interest in the Girton Interchange / A1198 junction arrangements."*
- 2.3 In response to the Council's feedback, the Highways Agency included an additional exhibition at The Hub in Cambourne.
- 2.4 The Highways Agency's SOCC included sections on features of the scheme, the application process, the autumn 2013 consultation on options and the proposals for a 10 week public consultation at the pre-application stage. As well as the SOCC, the HA made available a Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR), a Preliminary Traffic Report and the proposed scheme layout.
- 2.5 The Highways Agency committed to:
- Hold a 10 week public consultation between 7 April and 5 June 2014. All consultation venues and dates were identified on the basis of accessibility for individuals, including a selection of weekend and evening events, accessible entrances and clear signage.
  - Make the PEIR available at all consultation events and community drop off locations as well as on the HA's website.
  - All responses made during the consultation will be recorded and carefully considered by the HA and will influence, where appropriate, further refinements to the proposals.
  - Hold 30 manned events across the wider area of the scheme proposals. In addition consultation materials were made available at various deposit points.
  - Make Consultation materials available on the Highways Agency's website, and provide a Freepost address and email address to receive the consultation responses free of charge. Provide a phone number for queries.
- 2.6 The SOCC was printed in the Cambridge News on 31 March 2014 and The Hunts Post on 2 April 2014. The Highways Agency advertised the consultation on its website, and carried out a leaflet drop in the affected area.

2.7 The District Council is satisfied that the Highways Agency has carried out the consultation in accordance with the SOCC.

### **3. Duty to Consult Under the Act**

#### Duty to Publicise

- 3.1 In terms of the Duty to Publicise the Highways Agency advertised the intention to make an application in two local newspapers, the Cambridge News and the Hunts Post as follows:
- Cambridge News – 31 March 2014 – a daily paper
  - The Hunts Post – 2 April 2014 – a weekly paper
- 3.2 Both papers are prominent and read in the area of the scheme, and provide adequate geographical coverage of the affected area. The Cambridge News covers mainly the eastern end of the scheme, the Hunts Post the western end.
- 3.3 Circulation figures for the Cambridge News show a circulation in Cambridge, Cambridge Rural Area, and Huntingdon of circa 12,500 daily (2011 data from the Newspaper Society – more recent data not available). Circulation figures (Newspaper Society 2013) for the Hunts Post show a circulation for the Hunts Post of circa 40,000 copies per week.
- 3.4 It is understood that the Highways Agency carried out a leaflet drop in the local area of a consultation flyer. The District Council is unable to verify that this reached all intended addresses, but assumes that a high percentage of reasonable target addresses were reached, and this will be demonstrated in the Highways Agency's own Consultation Report.
- 3.5 The Highways Agency further advertised the consultation on its website. A deadline for responses to consultation was set as 23:59 on Sunday 15 June 2014, later extended to 12.00 am on 16 June 2014.
- 3.6 In terms of the Duty to Publicise the District Council considers that the Highways Agency took reasonable and effective measures to publicise its intent to make an application.

#### Duty to Consult

##### Compliance with Section 42(a)

- 3.7 The District Council is unable to provide an opinion on if the Highways Agency has satisfied the obligation to consult with the persons listed in Schedule 1 to the Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009, but assumes that the Highways Agency has done so, and will be able to satisfy the Planning Inspectorate that this is the case.

##### Compliance with Section 42(b)

- 3.8 With respect to the duty to consult with relevant bodies including the District Council, the District Council considers that the duty to consult was discharged. The District Council has had ongoing dialogue with the Highways Agency throughout the process although some technical information was made available

late in the process. The District Council expects the Highways Agency to continue to engage, and progress with this engagement will be summarised in the Statement of Common Ground.

#### Compliance with Section 42(c)

- 3.10 Section 42(c) of the Act does not apply to the A14 project as it is not in Greater London.

#### Compliance with Section 42(d)

- 3.11 The District Council has no information on the Highways Agency consultation with landowners and similar interests, but has been assured by the Highways Agency that such consultation has taken place. Again, the District Council assumes the Highways Agency will be able to satisfy the Planning Inspectorate on this point.

#### Duty to Consult the Local Community

- 3.12 With respect to the Duty to Consult with Communities, the District Council believes that the Highways Agency has met its obligations set out in the Statement of Community Consultation to consult with communities. The District Council, however, makes no comment on the adequacy of the response of the Highways Agency to comments made by communities, as it is understood that the Planning Inspectorate will consider this in Examination. The District Council will address impacts on local communities and the effectiveness of the Highways Agency response in the Local Impact Report.
- 3.13 The District Council adopted in January 2010 a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) providing information on how the Council will involve the community and other local and national stakeholders in the planning process. The Highways Agency has met the general consultation requirements included within the Statement of Community Involvement.

#### **4. Consultation with South Cambridgeshire District Council**

- 4.1 As a statutory consultee and Tier 1 Authority, the District Council has been involved in ongoing discussions on all aspects of the scheme.
- 4.2 Prior to making a DCO Application the Highways Agency has held a number of workshops with South Cambridgeshire District Council and other authorities to present key elements of the Environmental Statement, Transport Assessment and Design issues. At each stage there has been an opportunity for South Cambridgeshire District Council specialists to make comment on the Highways Agency proposals.
- 4.3 Due to the nature of the process and the short timescale between release of final proposals and the Application it has not been possible to reach full agreement with the Highways Agency on all matters pre-application. From South Cambridgeshire District Council's perspective, not all comments and observations made by South Cambridgeshire District Council have yet been adopted or taken on board by the Highways Agency. However, it is acknowledged that nonetheless the Highways Agency has responded to comments and concerns over the scheme from stakeholders generally in a positive manner, and has taken the opportunity to work closely with the District Council and others as the scheme has developed. This has resulted in changes to the proposals, some of which have been significant.
- 4.4 South Cambridgeshire District Council is content that the Highways Agency has consulted with them in developing the proposals, and is confident that the Highways Agency will continue to engage to resolve the outstanding areas of agreement. Progress with this engagement will be summarised in the Statement of Common Ground between the Highways Agency and South Cambridgeshire District Council to be submitted at Examination stage.
- 4.5 A summary of the meetings between South Cambridgeshire District Council and the Highways Agency can be found in Annex A.

## Annex A – Summary of Consultation with South Cambridgeshire District Council

Key meetings held between HA and SCDC

<b>Date</b>	<b>Purpose of Meeting</b>
<b>9<sup>th</sup> December 2013</b>	To discuss A14 Scheme design - initial meeting to identify areas of concern.
<b>16<sup>th</sup> December 2013</b>	Meeting to discuss the legacy of the A14
<b>9<sup>th</sup> January 2014</b>	Monthly Forum to outline and update the local authorities on process and programme
<b>16<sup>th</sup> January 2014</b>	Workshop to discuss design freeze 1
<b>21<sup>st</sup> January 2014</b>	Traffic Meeting to discuss A14 & Northstowe
<b>29<sup>th</sup> January 2014</b>	Forum to provide update of the scheme and discuss potential environmental issues.
<b>13<sup>th</sup> February 2014</b>	Monthly Forum to outline and update local authorities on process and programme
<b>14<sup>th</sup> February 2014</b>	Tier 1 Members Briefing
<b>14<sup>th</sup> March 2014</b>	Landscape Mitigation discussion with Local Authority Landscape Officers
<b>18<sup>th</sup> March 2014</b>	Monthly Forum to outline and update local authorities on process and programme
<b>12<sup>th</sup> May 2014</b>	Presentation to the Northstowe Joint Development Control Committee
<b>19<sup>th</sup> May 2014</b>	Regular progress meeting with Tier 1 Local Authorities.
<b>22<sup>nd</sup> May 2014</b>	Forum to provide update of the scheme and discuss potential environmental issues.
<b>24<sup>th</sup> June 2014</b>	Borrow Pits workshop

<b>30<sup>th</sup> June 2014</b>	Statement of Common Ground workshop
<b>16<sup>th</sup> July 2014</b>	Meeting on Landscape Liaison
<b>29<sup>th</sup> July 2014</b>	Environmental Forum
<b>18<sup>th</sup> August 2014</b>	Presentation of Design Freeze 4
<b>19<sup>th</sup> August 2014</b>	A14 update meeting & meeting with promoters of Darwin Green
<b>9<sup>th</sup> September 2014</b>	Traffic forecast presentation
<b>11<sup>th</sup> September 2014</b>	Workshop to discuss the draft Code of Construction Practice
<b>23<sup>rd</sup> September 2014</b>	Meeting to discuss the Statement of Common Ground
<b>20<sup>th</sup> October 2014</b>	Presentation of Environmental Impact Assessment
<b>24<sup>th</sup> October 2014</b>	DCO – Orders, Consents and Traffic Regulation Orders
<b>20<sup>th</sup> November 2014</b>	Member Presentation on Traffic Forecasts
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> December 2014</b>	Member Presentation on Environmental Statement