



The Planning
Inspectorate

Preliminary Meeting note

Application	A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon Improvement Scheme
File Reference	TR010018
Date	13 May 2015
Venue	Commemoration Hall, 39 High Street, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire PE29 3AQ

This meeting note is not a full transcript of the Preliminary Meeting but a summary of key points discussed and responses given. A complete audio recording of the event is available on the Planning Inspectorate's website.

List of speakers:

Frances Fernandes (FF)	Examining Authority
Kevin Gleeson (KG)	Examining Authority
Stephen Roscoe (SR)	Examining Authority
Patsy Dell	Cambridge City Council
Stuart Bell	Huntingdonshire District Council
Andrew Munro	Cambridgeshire County Council
Michael Alexander	Brown & Co representing landowner clients and A1 Agents Group
Peter Blakey	Hilton Parish Council
Joe Brien	
Andrew Bush	St Ives and District Area Road Safety Committee
Eileen Collier	Brampton A14 Campaign Group
Mike Evans	Highways England
Rupert Goodings	Cycling Touring Club
Chris Graveling	
Terry Hayward	Buckden Parish Council
Adam Ireland	Environment Agency
Liz Olding	
Robbie Owen	On behalf of Highways England
Andrew Parkinson	
Sara Partridge	
John Shere	Royal Observer Corps Association
Mike Shellens	Brampton Parish Council
Mark Stanton	
Louise Staples	National Farmers Union
Mike Straw	CgMs representing Bard Pharmaceuticals
Chris Todd	Campaign for Better Transport
Mark Williams	Buckden Marina Residents Association



Preliminary meeting commenced at 10.00am

Welcome and Introductions

Frances Fernandes (FF) welcomed attendees to the preliminary meeting. **FF** introduced herself and explained that she has been appointed as the lead member of a four person Panel of Inspectors who will constitute the Examining Authority (ExA) for the examination of the development control order (DCO) for the A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon Improvement scheme (the Application). **Kevin Gleeson (KG)** and **Stephen Roscoe (SR)** also introduced themselves as two other members of the ExA and **FF** added that Emyrs Parry who is the fourth member would not be joining the meeting today.

FF also introduced members of the Planning Inspectorate staff who were accompanying the Panel at the meeting. These were Peter Bond, Nicholas Coombes, Dean Alford and Ian Wallis.

The meeting was filmed on behalf of the Planning Inspectorate and one other IP with the agreement of the Panel on the understanding that this did not interrupt the meeting.

Examining Authority's remarks about the examination process

FF outlined the role of the ExA and the timetable for the examination and to report to the Secretary of State for Transport, who will make the final decision.

FF emphasised that no decisions have been taken by the ExA yet about the merits of the application.

FF stated that the Panel had read the application documents and all relevant representations and had carried out an unaccompanied site visit on 12 May 2015 to familiarise themselves with the area of the proposed application.

FF explained that the purpose of this meeting was to consider procedural issues only, relating to the way in which the application is to be examined and the timetable for that examination, and the Panel would not be discussing any matters relating to the merits of the proposal.

FF stated that she did not propose to make any procedural decisions at the meeting, but would issue a letter (known as a Rule 8 letter) as soon as practicable in which she would, amongst other things, set out the timetable for the examination. She added that the examination commences after the closure of the preliminary meeting.

FF explained the essential features of the examination. **FF** explained that the examination was an inquisitorial process in which the ExA takes the lead in establishing what is important and relevant to the decision which the Secretary of



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State needs to take. The ExA will be looking for evidence of what is important and relevant, and testing this to see how robust it is. **FF** said that the examination principally took the form of written representations, and explained how this would work in practice.

FF described how the ExA would ask their first round of questions with the Rule 8 letter and the way in which they would want to receive written responses to these questions and iterations based on any subsequent questions.

FF explained about the types of hearings and the circumstances in which they would be held, and emphasised the importance of making submissions at the earliest appropriate stage within the timetable set.

FF drew attention of the attendees at the meeting to the initial assessment of principal issues arising from the application as circulated in her letter of 17 April 2015. **FF** stated that the list of principal issues is not exclusive and parties can submit more details on these issues. If any other issues arise which appear to be important and relevant, they will also become part of the examination.

FF stated that the ExA had identified the power of temporary possession and the application of the Mining Code as an important and relevant issue for further consideration.

FF said that several interested parties had submitted requests to speak at the meeting. She then invited submissions on principal issues.

Chris Todd (Campaign for Better Transport) (**CT**) outlined four principal issues that they wanted to see examined: air quality emissions and the recent Supreme Court ruling in April 2015 on this; the biodiversity action plan; Highways England (HE) and Department for Transport (DfT) policies on visual impacts for road schemes; DfT Road Traffic forecast 2015 and various scenarios considered in relation to this.

Eileen Collier (Brampton A14 Campaign Group) (**EC**) proposed that alternative schemes for A14 should be addressed by HE and could be examined under design concept and process or design and engineering standards by the Panel; public health issues for Brampton; air quality issues; and other issues that the ExA stated were covered by principal issues.

Liz Olding raised the issue of flooding impacts on Brampton.

Louise Staples (**LS**) representing the National Farmers Union (NFU) stated that the main issues were clarification over the rights and powers sought for compulsory acquisition of NFU members land, and funding and compensation for blight, in relation to specific plots and routes; adequacy of the draft Development Consent Order (DCO); landscape; mitigation measures; and flooding.



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Mark Stanton (MS) also raised the recent Supreme Court judgment on air quality and new standards for visual impacts for schemes mentioned above.

Rupert Goodings (Cycling Touring Club) (**RG**) requested that non-motorised users (NMUs) facilities for the proposed scheme and design of scheme for NMUs; and that the de-trunking of A14 and restoration of NMU access should be considered.

Mark Williams (Buckden Marina Residents Association and Castle Mariners) (**MW**) outlined three issues: availability of data on noise impact; lack of visual representations e.g. bridge design; and compensation for blight outside compulsory acquisition such as noise insulation and for loss of property values.

Terry Hayward (Buckden Parish Council) (**TH**) said there was a lack of data on Brampton Road in the application in relation to economic and pollution issues from the proposed scheme and on alternatives to the proposal.

Patsy Dell (Cambridge City Council) (**PD**) wished to see reference to Cambridge in relation to traffic flows and consequences.

Joe Brien (JB) raised the issues of alternative routes with respect to blockages and road works to the proposed A14; impact on Huntingdon if the Huntingdon viaduct is removed.

John Shere (Royal Observer Corps Association and Heritage Team) raised the issue of the impact of construction on heritage sites.

Adam Ireland (Environment Agency) raised the issue of contaminated land sites.

Mike Shellens (Brampton Parish Council) (**MS/BPC**) requested that clarity of land taken near Brampton and the role of borrow pits in the proposed scheme should be made clear.

Chris Graveling raised the issue of traffic noise /vibration reduction after construction.

Mike Straw (from CgMs representing Bard Pharmaceuticals) (**MS/CgMS**) sought clarification on the land take at the Cambridgeshire Science Park, in particular, and how this might affect business operations if land take is required.

Michael Alexander (A1 Agents Group) (**MA**) representing approximately twenty four landowners potentially affected by the application, raised the issue of the adequacy of the DCO requirements particularly in relation to the accuracy of the Book of Reference (BoR) and in relation to environmental impacts of the scheme.



Draft timetable for the examination

KG referred to the draft timetable Annex D of the letter of 17 April.

KG asked Highways England to confirm that they understood the ExAs request for the applicant to provide a table which shows the commonality on specific points between Statements of Common Ground to be updated during the examination to reflect additional agreement achieved. **Robbie Owen (RO)** representing Highways England, confirmed he had understood. **KG** added that the Panel were aware of Highways England's letter of 11 May regarding the draft timetable and would consider this.

RO wished the Panel to be aware of the impact that any delay in submission of written submissions and Local Impact Reports (LIRs) from local authorities (LAs) would have on the applicant meeting timetable deadlines.

LS (NFU) requested that the deadline for the Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) be extended until the end of June 2015.

FF noted for the benefit of the meeting that all the representations referred to were available on the planning portal's national infrastructure website for this application.

KG referred to the relevant representations received for the application and invited comments on these by Deadline I (Monday 1 June 2015).

KG asked **Stuart Bell (SB)** of Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC), **Andrew Munro (AM)** of Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) and **Patsy Dell (PD)** of Cambridge City Council (CCtyC) to set out their position in respect of the draft timetable and the production of Local Impact Reports.

AM (CCC) explained that they were preparing a joint LIR with HDC, SCDC, and CCtyC but are constrained by democratic processes such as Committee approval and therefore were seeking an extension from the ExA to the deadline for submission of the joint LIR and written representations. The traffic modelling information from HE would also be scrutinised by CCC and this might cause difficulty in meeting the draft timetable. **SB** (HDC) and **PD** (CCtyC) will also be constrained in meeting submission deadlines for the joint LIR and written submissions for the same reasons.

KG said that the Panel does not expect the LIR and written representations to have gone through full council or cabinet and suggested that these documents could be submitted for Deadline 2 with caveats as to their status with final versions submitted for Deadline 3.



Hearings and accompanied site visit

FF confirmed that a rough plan of the unaccompanied site visit undertaken by the Panel on 12 May 2015 along with a brief note of the visit will be made available on the planning portal website for the application.

FF said that the Panel is proposing to hold an accompanied site visit on Thursday 16 July 2015 and asked for parties to let the Panel know by 1 June (Deadline 1) if there are specific locations that they wish the Panel to see. The itinerary for the site visit will be published on the planning portal on Friday 5 June 2015.

FF said the Panel would consider requests to visit locations at particular times during the accompanied site visit on the 16 July but to let the Panel know by 1 June (Deadline 1).

RO of HE and **LS** (NFU) requested that the Panel reserve a second day for accompanied site visits as it may be quite ambitious to cover the whole route for all the locations in one day.

FF notified the meeting that it would be the Panel's intention to issue agendas for hearings on the infrastructure pages of the Planning Portal about 7 days in advance of the hearings, as this aids preparation for the hearings for all parties concerned.

FF outlined the number of hearings including dates and timing that the Panel have programmed for the examination.

FF confirmed that the Panel would be holding open floor hearings in different locations and listed the likely venues for these. **FF** asked if anyone wishes to speak at an open floor hearing to let the Panel know by Monday 15 June (Deadline 2).

FF highlighted the deadline for any requests to attend a compulsory acquisition hearing as Wednesday 19 August (Deadline 5).

FF asked the applicant to note that at several points in the timetable the Panel have asked for a report on the status of negotiations with affected persons in respect of compulsory acquisition for each plot. These are requested at Deadline 1, 2, 3 and 5. **FF** also confirmed that any IP who wished to report on the status of negotiations at these deadlines was also welcome to do so.

FF invited comments from any interested party and the applicant on the proposed schedule of hearings.

Andrew Parkinson sought clarification on whether the examination could be extended by the Panel. **FF** confirmed that the examination period could be extended under very special circumstances, but is set at 6 months by the Planning Act 2008 (as amended).



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Andrew Bush (St Ives and District Area Road Safety Committee) was concerned that two interested parties on the committee had not been notified of the preliminary meeting and asked if the Panel could confirm the accuracy of the interested parties database. **FF** referred Mr Bush to the Planning Inspectorate staff responsible for the mailing list who would be able to investigate this.

Peter Blakey (Hilton Parish Council) asked whether any resident of Hilton can attend an open floor hearing at Hilton or if they need to be registered as an interested party. **FF** confirmed that anyone could attend the open floor hearing but it would be at the Panel's discretion whether they would be able to speak if they were not already registered as an interested party. It is a good idea for persons wishing to speak to notify the Planning Inspectorate in advance of the hearing although anyone can request to speak at the open floor hearing.

RG (CTC) asked when the topics for the issues specific hearings would be made known. **FF** replied that it was not possible at this stage to state what the topics for the hearings would be. These will be identified in due course.

Revised application documents submitted by the applicant following advice issued by the Planning Inspectorate at acceptance of the application

SR informed the meeting that since the letter of 17 April the Panel had received three submissions from the applicant, Highways England. All three submissions are published on the Planning Portal website. The first dated 15 April seeks to address various matters contained within advice issued by the Planning Inspectorate when the application was accepted. The second on 8 May contains errata and changes to the application. The third letter of 12 May sets out the applicants position in relation to further traffic modelling work and suggested changes to the draft examination timetable.

SR explained that the Rule 8 letter will set out how the Panel intends to respond to these submissions although the proposal is that interested parties will be able to respond to these submissions by 15 June 2015 (Deadline 2).

Any proposed revisions to the applicant's Transport Assessment following the publication of the Department for Transport's Road Traffic Forecasts 2015

A discussion was held between **SR**, **RO** and **Mike Evans** of Highways England and the local authorities on the preparation and submission of traffic modelling work and its effects on the draft timetable. The draft timetable will be amended in the light of these discussions.

CT (CBT) raised a question over whether the new traffic modelling would include the range of DfT's new Road Traffic Forecast scenarios and take account of these or provide justification on why it has not. **CT** was also concerned about the lack of time



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they would have to respond to the new traffic modelling data to meet existing timetable deadlines for written representations.

Sara Partridge was concerned that the deadline to let the ExA know if anyone wanted to speak at an open floor hearing was when only some of the LIRs would be made available.

Any other matters

LS (NFU) wanted clarification on whether the A14 would remain as a trunk road, and on access arrangements for agricultural vehicles.

EC asked that hard copies of the application documents be placed in Huntingdon Library. **RO** responded on behalf of the applicant that the library was unable to take the documents when they had enquired but that they would provide an alternative location where the documents could be seen in Huntingdon and inform the Planning Inspectorate by letter when this had been arranged.

RO also stated that an updated version of the application document on the Case for the Scheme in relation to an assessment of how the scheme relates to the Government's recent National Policy Statement for National Networks would be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate later in the afternoon.

In relation to the request in Annex G of the letter of 17 April, for two matrices in relation to the Habitats Regulations 2010 as amended, **RO** suggested that the applicant could provide these by 7 July 2015 (Deadline 3).

RO asked the Panel to consider before issuing the 'Rule 8' letter what requirements they might place on the Brampton A14 Campaign Group in providing information on an alternative scheme.

All of the above comments made during the meeting were noted by the Panel and **FF** thanked everyone for their engagement. She confirmed that the Panel would send out a letter (known as the Rule 8 letter) as soon as practicably possible which will confirm the timetable and any other decisions taken as a result of the meeting, and then announced that the meeting was closed at 12.40pm.

Close of the Preliminary Meeting at 12.40pm