



25 May 2015

The Planning Inspectorate,
3/18 Eagle Wing,
Temple Quay House,
2 The Square,
BRISTOL
BS1 6PN

Your Ref: TR010018

My Ref: 10030415

Dear Sir,

Application by Highways England for an Order Granting Development Consent for the A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon Improvement Scheme

I write to give further observations and objections to part of the above scheme following your letter of 21 May 2015. My comments are concerned solely with that section under consideration regarding access to Huntingdon town centre and the Public Notices affixed to structures in the vicinity of the A14 viaduct over the railway and the B1514 Brampton Road.

Current Situation

Traffic entering Huntingdon town centre from the A1 or A14 does so via the B1514 Brampton Road or the B1044 Ermine Street. Of these, the Brampton Road route is the most congested at peak times. This is particularly so during school term times with slow moving traffic from 07.30 to 09.00. During this period, queues towards Huntingdon can extend along Brampton Road towards Brampton beyond the Bromholme Lane junction and along Hinchingsbrooke Park Road towards Snowdonia Way. At the same time, there is considerable two-way traffic along Hinchingsbrooke Park Road serving Hinchingsbrooke School and Hinchingsbrooke Hospital. From 08.00 to 08.45 there is also substantial pedestrian and cycle traffic along Hinchingsbrooke Park Road, Brampton Road and George Street, mostly heading towards the school and hospital. Much of the latter traffic is on the segregated footpath and cycle route but it still has to cross the major road traffic flows at some point.

The flow of traffic towards the town centre has already been impeded by the recently opened junction at the railway station with the Huntingdon Western Relief Road. The traffic lights at this junction are now at red for traffic along Brampton Road twice as frequently and for three times longer than they were previously when they only served the station road. Also, the junction has created problems for pedestrians and cyclists. If you arrive at the junction during the peak period just after the signal has changed to red and cross strictly in accordance with the 'green man' signal, it can take up to 4 minutes to reach the other side, a previously uninterrupted walking time of 15 seconds. Teenage school children take considerable risks rather than wait!

The evening peak is slightly different. Traffic first builds along Hinchingsbrooke Park Road from about 15.45 and can extend along its length to the roundabout at the hospital entrance by 16.15. By 17.00, traffic volume is increasing on Brampton Road causing the queues on Hinchingsbrooke Park Road to persist.

Traffic leaving Huntingdon along George Street and Brampton Road can be queuing back along the town centre ring road as far as The Old Bridge Hotel during both peak times, again caused by the new junction with the Western Relief Road at the station.

Scheme Proposals

There is to be a link into Hinchingsbrooke Park Road immediately to the west of the viaduct and into Brampton Road immediately to the east, with another link further east in to town centre ring road at Mill Common. According to the Public Notices, the links immediately either side of the viaduct are to provide a through route for light traffic avoiding the A14. In other words, the planners intend to provide a route for traffic that has no reason to be in Huntingdon to cross on the flat traffic that has every reason to be in Huntingdon. Not only that, but the peak flows for both routes will almost coincide.

Such a junction will also create a further problem. Traffic bound for Huntingdon currently using the A1/A14 link from Alconbury will not access Huntingdon as at present via the A141/B1044 from Spittals. Instead, it will continue beneath the Spittals interchange and head for the new junction at Hinchingsbrooke Park Road.

I cannot conceive how the planners thought such a junction arrangement at the viaduct was credible. There is already enough delay to traffic accessing Huntingdon along Brampton Road and Hinchingsbrooke Park Road at peak times without diverting into it Huntingdon bound traffic currently using a more free flowing Ermine Street and bringing everything to a complete standstill with Cambridge bound traffic crossing on the flat! When you also take into account the number of pedestrians and cyclists in the vicinity at these times, you are creating the circumstances for accidents and serious injury. Delays along Brampton Road towards Huntingdon will persist for much of the day. Brampton and Hinchingsbrooke Park will be effectively cut off from Huntingdon. Also, traffic queues along the town centre ring road will be extended, creating more conflict at adjoining roads.

The traffic volumes and congestion caused by these proposals will delay the passage of emergency vehicles trying to access the town centre, Godmanchester and routes to the east.

The link between the A14 and Mill Common will have a neutral effect in terms of traffic volume for those vehicles currently using the B1044 through Godmanchester. All Huntingdon bound traffic from both routes will join at Mill Common, but the congestion along the B1044 in Godmanchester will be relieved by the proposals.

Alternative Proposals

1. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD THERE BE ANY LINK INTO THE ROAD SYSTEM FROM THE CURRENT A14 IMMEDIATELY EITHER SIDE OF THE VIADUCT OVER THE B1514 BRAMPTON ROAD.
2. Retain the road between the Spittals and Godmanchester interchanges, including the viaduct. In order to ensure that it is used only by light vehicles, as set out in the Public Notice, there should be a fixed height restriction of 1.9m and gross vehicle weight restriction of two tonnes between the two interchanges. Also, to reduce further the impact on the viaduct, a speed restriction of 30 mph should be imposed over the viaduct itself. This proposal should save at least £1 million from the overall A14 construction costs.
3. As proposal 2 but with a link into the Huntingdon town centre ring road at Mill Common. This link should be given priority direction at the junction with the former A14. In this case, the west bound height and weight restrictions would apply immediately west of the junction with the former A14.
4. Obliterate all traces of the road between the Spittals and Godmanchester interchanges. All the land released should be returned to the local council. A short spur, **for emergency vehicles only**, should be constructed from west of the Spittals interchange to the northwest corner of the hospital complex where the A & E department is situated. This would give the hospital its best connection with the surrounding road network compared with anything currently available.
5. As proposal 4 but with the link from the Godmanchester interchange to Mill Common retained.

Yours faithfully,

Dr Keith Barker