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Sent: 12 June 2015 17:44  
To: A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon  
Cc: [s.norton@dpmms.cam.ac.uk](mailto:s.norton@dpmms.cam.ac.uk)  
Subject: Re: A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon Improvement Scheme (TR010018)

I have registered as an Interested Party for the public examination into the proposed A14 Cambridge-Huntingdon upgrade scheme (TR010018). My reference number is 10030548. Below is my written representation.

I am Simon Norton of [REDACTED] [s.norton@dpmms.cam.ac.uk](mailto:s.norton@dpmms.cam.ac.uk)>. I am coordinator of Cambs Campaign for Better Transport, whose website is at <<http://www.cambsbettertransport.org.uk>>, but this representation is being submitted in a purely individual capacity -- though the issue has been discussed among our group.

I have several concerns about the scheme as it is now planned. Here is a short summary.

1. Induced traffic: the scheme will lead to traffic growth over a wide area which will negate many of the supposed benefits.
2. Huntingdon town centre: the removal of the Huntingdon viaduct opens up an opportunity to deal with the blight caused by the existing route to Huntingdon's unique network of commons, but rather than doing this the scheme will make the corridor the nucleus of a new Huntingdon local road network.
3. Non-motorised travel: inadequate provision has been made for non-motorised traffic crossing the route. (Note that here and elsewhere, when I consider particular locations in my detailed representation, these will generally be from east to west.)
4. Missed opportunities: there are other areas where opportunities for local access or environmental improvements have been opened up, but are not being taken advantage of. In some cases there may only be a narrow window of opportunity before the chance is lost.
5. Value for money: the scheme does not represent value for money, with much of the claimed benefit being offset by the adverse effects of induced traffic. There are other ways of spending the money which would bring a much greater benefit.
6. Alternative options: alternative options have not been adequately considered. I am including two such options with this representation. Note that I am aware that some elements of these options may be beyond the powers of Highways England; in such cases I believe that they should seek the relevant expertise to properly appraise these alternative ideas, with a view to the possible formation of a partnership with whoever does have the power to implement the relevant idea.
7. Guided Busway: in addition, there has been publicity recently about defects in the Cambs Guided Busway which suggests that major repairs will be necessary -

- see for example <<http://cambridge-news.co.uk/Guided-busway-defects-lead-closures-weekend/story-263-5240-detail/story.html>>.

These were unforeseen and it must be at least possible that further problems will emerge which will mean that the cost of keeping the busway in good condition may be too great to be sustained in the long term. I therefore call for the following:

7.1. During any construction work that might take place on the A14, major lane closures should not be imposed when the busway is also closed.

7.2. In any reconstruction of the Huntingdon viaduct, passive provision should be made for restoring the old rail link in case a reopened railway between Cambridge and Huntingdon is found to be the most economic option in the long term. I will be dealing with this in 2.1 below.

Now let me expand on these.

1. Induced Traffic. About 25 years ago concerns were expressed that road building was exacerbating the problems it was supposed to solve by encouraging traffic growth, and in response to this the Standing Advisory Committee on Trunk Road Assessment (SACTRA) was tasked with studying this problem. Its report, "Trunk Roads and the Generation of Traffic", published in 1994, concluded that induced traffic, as the phenomenon is known, was likely to be a problem especially in the following circumstances (Paragraph 13, page iii of the report):

- o when the network is operating or expected to operate close to capacity

- o where traveller responsiveness to changes in travel times or costs is high, as may occur when trips are suppressed by congestion and then released when the network is improved

- o where the implementation of a scheme causes large changes in travel costs.

In the case of the A14 the first of these conditions is certainly satisfied -- indeed the shortage of capacity is cited as one of the justifications for the scheme. The existence of a high quality bus service on the Guided Busway, including a park & ride service, which enables some people to avoid congestion on the A14 altogether, suggests that some people may be choosing it for that reason, but may switch back if extra capacity on the A14 was provided. So two out of the above three conditions look like being satisfied, which seems to me sufficient prima facie evidence to suggest that the scheme might lead to a substantial amount of induced traffic.

The SACTRA report came to the conclusion that, averaging out over a variety of major trunk road schemes, one could expect induced traffic to amount to about 20% of overall traffic levels in the long term.

These figures were quoted in an article written by Prof Phil Goodwin, published in "Local Transport Today" issue 450 on 24 Aug 2006. The article went on to describe how the Highways Agency, as it then was, acknowledges the

phenomenon of induced traffic in principle, but does not take adequate account of it in practice. To the best of my knowledge it remains the case that the forecasting models in use don't account for all induced traffic.

Some of the adverse effects relate to the fact that induced traffic on the A14 will also be using local roads, dispersed over a wide area, for other parts of its journeys. It is inconsistent for cost-benefit assessments to include minor time savings by individual travellers on the basis that they aggregate to a worthwhile sum when taken together, while failing to consider that minor adverse effects, dispersed over a wide area, may similarly aggregate to a significant sum when similarly taken together.

These adverse effects include the following:

1.1. Climate change -- surface transport accounts for a significant proportion of the UK's climate change emissions, and are mainly due to cars and road goods vehicles. If induced traffic is actually generated, then it will certainly lead to extra emissions. If it is transferred from other modes, this will also be the case as lorries are less fuel efficient than railfreight while cars are less fuel efficient than walking, cycling, passenger trains or buses.

If it is considered that the UK's emissions targets are set in stone, then any increase in transport related emissions will reduce the scope for wealth generating activity elsewhere in the economy (e.g. if we have a carbon market in which the transport sector is ready to snap up any available emissions permits). On the other hand, if our Government is setting its targets on the basis of its traffic forecasts rather than the scientific evidence on climate change, then it is being irresponsible in the face of ever growing evidence about the urgency of the problem.

1.2. Air pollution -- the UK is currently in breach of air quality obligations in many areas and this will get worse if the amount of traffic grows.

1.3. Noise -- many people suffer from traffic noise, both when in their homes and when they are out.

1.4. Danger -- casualties on the scale of those prevailing on our local streets would not be tolerated in any other sector of the economy.

1.5. Congestion -- much of the traffic on a route such as the A14 starts or finishes its journey in a congested town or city, possibly during the peak period, and traffic growth will further increase this congestion. Schemes such as Cambridge's City Deal are unlikely to alleviate this more than marginally.

1.6. Revenue abstraction from public transport -- which could cause major hardship if it leads to service cuts, given Cambs County Council's lack of available resources and/or their unwillingness to use such resources as they have for revenue support.

These adverse effects will not be alleviated by out of town developments. Instead, these developments will undermine the economies of our traditional town and city centres. As these centres are easily accessible by a variety of

modes, while out of town sites are usually inconvenient to get to except by car, this will cause hardship to people without access to cars, and lead to increased car dependence which will further stimulate traffic growth, thus actually increasing most of the adverse effects referred to above.

Finally, if the argument is being made that induced traffic is to be welcomed because the release of suppressed demand would stimulate economic activity, then I would answer as follows:

1.6.1. The type of economic activity that would be stimulated would mainly be car dependent and would therefore further stimulate traffic growth and disadvantage people without access to cars.

1.6.2. It would surely be much more cost effective to improve public transport and release the demand currently suppressed by the plain unavailability of transport facilities, not only in our rural areas but increasingly in our towns and cities as well.

2. Huntingdon. The building of the current A14 through Huntingdon was one of the worst mistakes of the 1970s roads programme. It sliced through Huntingdon's network of commons, blighting these open spaces with traffic noise; it failed to provide a route for Huntingdon's local access from the east, so that this traffic is still blighting Godmanchester; and it took over part of the formation of the old railway route towards St Ives and Cambridge, possibly dealing a critical blow to the chances of restoring this route when this was being actively considered (e.g. as part of the Cambridge-Huntingdon Multi-Modal Study -- CHUMMS).

Taking these in reverse order:

2.1. The last may be irrevocable -- but in view of the significant chance that the cost of maintaining the guided busway that has replaced the railway between Cambridge and St Ives might be too great in the longer term I contend that it would be prudent to include passive provision to reinstate the railway in any plan to reconstruct the road network in this area. A reinstated railway between Cambridge and Huntingdon would serve populated areas throughout its length, in view of the plans for a new town at Northstowe; and, as well as carrying local traffic, it would provide a useful feeder facility to the East Coast Main Line at one end and Stansted Airport at the other.

2.2. The replacement of the Huntingdon viaduct by a new ground level junction with Brampton Road will indeed open up an opportunity to remove through traffic from Godmanchester, e.g. by closing Town Bridge to certain classes of traffic including private motorists. However unless this opportunity is seized quickly it may disappear as traffic in the Godmanchester area continues to grow.

2.3. Because of the consequent potential to remove traffic from Godmanchester, as described above, I would reluctantly accept that the stretch of road across Mill Common, east of Brampton Road, should remain.

But I can find no such reason to maintain the stretch across Views Common, between Brampton Road and the Spittals interchange, and therefore call for this section to be returned to grass. To do this would open up opportunities for

improved walking and cycling links between the Stukeley Meadows housing estate and the Hinchingsbrooke complex (hospital, school, housing, business park and country park), while eliminating the blight caused by A14 traffic noise, which would still be significant if the existing A14 became a spine road for Huntingdon's local traffic as seems to be currently envisaged.

The improvement in walking and cycling facilities would also bring health benefits -- in particular helping to reduce obesity, which Jeremy Hunt, the Secretary of State for Health, has earmarked as a priority.

In summary, my suggestion is that any plans to provide a new trunk road to supersede this section of the A14 should include the following:

- o Passive provision for railway reinstatement on the section between Huntingdon station and Godmanchester (see 2.1).
- o Traffic restriction measures to prevent through traffic from the A14 east and A1198 from traversing Godmanchester en route to Huntingdon town centre (see 2.2).
- o Return of the Views Common section to grass (see 2.3).

3. The following are the main points of issue regarding non-motorised travel.

As mentioned in 2.3 above, the encouragement of walking -- and, where feasible, cycling -- would bring health benefits; but I believe that it could also help to knit communities together if, for example, schoolchildren could make friends with pupils from nearby villages and use public rights of way to visit them, thus getting the health benefits of physical activity and avoiding the dangers of heavily trafficked roads.

3.1. Girton. At present there are historic rights of way approaching the south side of the A14 near Girton from Dry Drayton and Madingley (near the American Cemetery), as well as a minor road from Madingley village; and another from the north side of the A14 to Girton village. Bearing in mind the above, I therefore call any major work on the A14 at this point to include a new crossing.

3.2. I am fairly satisfied with the links between the proposed new local road and Cambridge Crematorium, also Lolworth village; but less so at Bar Hill.

It is certainly an improvement that users of the bridleway between Longstanton and the A14 will be able to get across to get to Bar Hill, but the crossing will not be at the most convenient point for users of this route.

With the development of Northstowe the route is likely to assume increasing importance as a cycle route between there and Bar Hill, and I therefore call for as direct as possible an extension of the bridleway to Crafts Way in Bar Hill.

3.3. At present there is a major problem with crossing the A14 in the area with Fen Drayton on one side and Conington on the other. Such a crossing is necessary not only to link rights of way and minor roads on either side but to give access to bus stops for people travelling to/from the above villages.

Much of the traffic on this section is to be removed by the new A14, but it is still to remain dual carriageway, which means that development in the area may lead to regrowth of traffic. So I would like to be assured that the level of traffic when the new road opens will be low enough for a safe crossing, and that a watch will be kept on the situation so that if it rises to the extent that the crossing ceases to be safe a bridge can be provided quickly.

See also my comments on this area in 4.2 below.

3.4. At one time there was a right of way running west from Brampton village across the A1. Some time ago this was severed. Later, Brampton Wood, which had been under Ministry of Defence ownership and without public access, was put up for sale, and a public appeal (to which I contributed) was made to buy it to use as a nature reserve.

The distance from the Wood to the nearest bus stop on the route serving Brampton (Stagecoach 66) would be about a mile less via the right of way than via the local road that passes the Wood on the south side. But when I last tried (which was quite a number of years ago), though I was able to get across the A1, on the far side I found I had some water to negotiate before reaching the right of way, which meant a significant detour (though less than a mile).

The scheme as proposed will involve the A1 crossing the A14 about half a mile from this point, and a walking and cycling route is to be provided so that people can use a path alongside the A1 to cross the A14 and vice versa. But a mile's walk alongside heavily trafficked roads, with the associated noise and air pollution, is hardly conducive to the enjoyment of the countryside wanted by visitors to a nature reserve, and will considerably reduce the health benefits that this attractive walking opportunity could bring. I therefore call for a direct crossing roughly on the line of the old right of way.

4. It seems to me that there are three other important missed opportunities.

4.1. Girton. At present traffic coming off the A428 from Cambourne and seeking to join the M11 towards London has to leave it on the junction with the A1303 near Madingley village then travel about 2 miles on the A1303.

This section of road is liable to congestion, especially in the morning peak, and it would be much better if the Girton interchange could be reconfigured so that it could stay on the A428 to Girton and join the M11 there. Under the present layout at Girton I think it would be possible to insert a new cloverleaf just north of where the A428 runs under the M11 to allow this movement, but the proposed reconstruction would make this impossible. I therefore call for the design to be modified in such a way as to allow for the provision of this movement. (Provision for the reverse movement, from the M11 to the A428, should present no problem, incidentally.)

4.2. Fenstanton. Present proposals are that Huntingdon bound traffic should stay on the present route where it diverges from the new route near Fen Drayton. I would like to remove this traffic to the new road and the A1198 for the following reasons:

4.2.1. To assist people needing to cross the road in the neighbourhood of Fen Drayton or Conington (see 3.3 above).

4.2.2. To maximise noise relief in Fenstanton, where the existing road runs very close to the village.

4.2.3. To assist the removal of the detour faced by eastbound vehicles from Huntingdon to Hemingford Abbots. At present there is a bus service that goes this way (Whippet 5) but the operator is planning to withdraw the relevant section of route. It would help to get it reinstated if half a mile could be taken off the distance.

The main requirement here would be east facing slip roads at the junction between the new A14 and the A1198. It is also for this reason that under my scaled down alternative proposals the new road would be dual 3 lane east of the A1198 but dual 2 lane west thereof (see 6.10.1 below).

4.3. Buckden and Offord. There are several issues here.

Network Rail wants to close all level crossings on the East Coast Main Line, including the one at Offord. Its proposed alternative for vehicular traffic involves diverting the road in the neighbourhood of Buckden Marina to run high over the river and railway before joining the B1043 north of Offord Cluny.

I regard this new bridge as quite intrusive and, if we are to have another new bridge to carry the A14, I see no reason why this can't be used as the route for through traffic.

What's required is a local road from Silver St in Buckden to the proposed A1/A14 interchange there, and east facing slip roads at the junction with the B1043.

I envisage that, as per the current plans, non-motorised traffic would have its own crossing near the existing road bridge. However, I also have a proposal which would extend this idea, namely to reopen the former station at this point (with a layout similar to that at Arlesey on the same line) and also to provide a park & ride/coachway interchange at the A1/A14 junction at Buckden. The latter would be served by both east-west (A14 corridor) and north-south (A1 corridor) coaches, as well as a possible dedicated park & ride bus to Cambridge, and both the coachway and the station would be served by local buses to Huntingdon, St Neots and local villages. The coachway could also provide alternative access to Brampton Wood (see 3.4 above).

5. Value for money. I have already dealt with the main arguments at the end of Section 1 above.

6. Alternative options. Here are the two options I am proposing. The first can be described as "do minimum", while the second is based on downsizing the scheme as proposed. Both involve the following:

6.1. Any local safety improvements that are felt to be needed.

6.2. No widening of the A14 east of Bar Hill.

6.3. Provision of a local road running westwards from Girton, roughly as per present plans. I have no comment to make, under either option, about which junctions with the A14 could then be removed. This local road will bring significant benefits to bus users as well as walkers and cyclists, for example giving access to eastbound as well as westbound buses at both Cambridge Crematorium and Lolworth Turn.

6.4. Inclusion of an M11/A428 link in any remodelling of the Girton interchange (see 4.1 above).

6.5. Provision of improved rights of way crossings at Girton, Bar Hill and Brampton (see 3.1, 3.2 and 3.4 above).

6.6. Upgrade of the Felixstowe-Nuneaton railway so that it can carry all the railfreight on offer: in particular this includes full double tracking of the Felixstowe branch.

6.7. Introduction of traffic restraint schemes in the Cambridge travel to work area.

6.8. Provision of an express coach service between Cambridge and Rugby which would:

6.8.1: Connect with trains at Cambridge, Huntingdon, Kettering and Rugby.

6.8.2. Serve the town/city centres at Cambridge, Thrapston and Rugby (the first and last being somewhat distant from the rail stations).

6.8.3. Serve new coachway/park & ride interchanges near the junctions with the A1 and the M1/M6.

6.8.4. Without leaving the A14, serve local villages close to the route -- the sections between Huntingdon and Thrapston, and between Rothwell and the M1/M6, are a public transport desert at present.

6.8.5. Link in with schemes to boost sustainable tourism serving attractions such as Grafham Water, Harrington Air Museum, the Midshires Way, Kelmarsch and Maidwell Halls, Naseby Battlefield, the Grand Union Canal near Elkington and Stanford Hall.

This idea is discussed in further detail in the reply of Cambs Campaign for Better Transport to the 2012 A14 Challenge consultation, which is on the national Campaign for Better Transport website at a page linked from <http://www.bettertransport.org.uk/nlogs/roads/030212-a14challenge>.

The "do minimum" option would also involve the following:

6.9.1. The A14 would remain on its present alignment and width throughout.

6.9.2. The local road proposed in 6.3 above would run as far as the A1096, taking over various existing roads that run parallel to the A14.

6.9.3. A new crossing would be provided between Fen Drayton and Conington (see 3.3 above).

6.9.4. The coachway/park & ride interchange proposed in 6.8.3 above would be in the neighbourhood of Brampton Racecourse, and could be served by coaches on both the A1 and A14 corridors, guided buses currently terminating at Hinchingsbrooke Hospital (which has adequate links with the Racecourse site via Hinchingsbrooke Business Park), and a dedicated park & ride bus to Cambridge.

The other option involves removing the Huntingdon viaduct, and includes the following:

6.10.1. The new road would be dual 3 lane east of the A1198, then dual 2 lane to the A1.

6.10.2. There would be east facing slip roads at the A1198 junction and west facing slip roads at the B1043 junction (I have no opinion on whether there should also be east facing slip roads there).

6.10.3. Dualling should be removed from the section of the current A14 between where it diverges from the new route and Brampton Road in Huntingdon, unless someone can come up with a convincing reason for retaining it that doesn't involve future traffic growth. Consideration should be given to using the released capacity for public transport (this was recommended in the CHUMMS report) or for walking/cycling. Under this programme there is unlikely to be a need for a bridge in the Fen Drayton/Conington area.

6.10.4. The proposals for the Huntingdon section in Section 2 above should be implemented.

6.10.5. The coachway interchange proposed in 6.6.3 above would be near Buckden as proposed in 4.3 above, and the rest of the proposals in that paragraph would be implemented.

7. Guided busway. Regarding 7.1 (phasing of construction), I would expect both my proposals to reduce the need for temporary lane closures on the existing route, thus making it easier to satisfy my proposed conditions.

However, if the scheme goes ahead as planned, then I continue to ask that the phasing of construction should ensure that either the A14 or the guided busway is available at all times. I have already dealt with 7.2 (passive provision for rail reopening) -- see 2.1 above.

Simon Norton 12 June 2015

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