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A14
Cambridge to Huntingdon improvement scheme
Development Consent Order Application Response to the First Written Questions

HE/A14/EX/34

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Report 7: Economic and Social Effects

June 2015

The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010

A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon improvement scheme

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Question 1.7.1

The proposed development would result in the permanent loss of 987.7ha of agricultural land and the temporary loss of 219.9ha of agricultural land (ES Table 16.9). Natural England has advised that a detailed field survey should be carried out to identify the grades of affected land where this data does not already exist to confirm the loss of Best and Most Versatile (BMV) Land (Grades 1, 2 and 3a in the Agricultural Land Classification system). Can the applicant provide details of the breakdown of land take in grades 3a and 3b?

Response

1. In brief, 95% of Grade 3 land is Grade 3a (Best and Most Versatile [BMV] land) and 5% is Grade 3b (non BMV land).

2. Table 16.9 of the *A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon Improvement Scheme Environmental Statement (ES), (document reference 6.1*), identifies that the total permanent land take of agricultural, non-agricultural and urban land is 987.7ha and the temporary land take would be 219.9ha. The BMV land affected equates to 99.5% of all agricultural land affected by the proposed scheme and 94.9% of all land affected by the proposed scheme. This effectively represents a worst case as the proportion of BMV assumed for agricultural land is very close to 100%.

3. It should be noted that since publication of the ES, discrepancies have been found in the data reported in the ES for agricultural land take as noted in Table 4.1 of the HE/A14/EX/10 Development Consent Order Application Errata Report (May 2015). Permanent agricultural land take is now calculated to be 781.7ha and temporary agricultural land take is calculated to be 223.1ha.

4. As noted in response to Written Question 1.7.2, the Provisional Agricultural Land Classification for England data available through the Government's Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) was used for the purposes of the ES. This is referred to as 'the provisional ALC mapping' in the remainder of this response.

5. These data do not differentiate Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) Grade 3 into sub-grades 3a (BMV land) and 3b (non BMV land). As highlighted at paragraph 16.2.26 of the ES, Volume 6.1, it has been conservatively assumed that all soil mapped at ALC Grade 3 falls into the Grade 3a BMV land category, thus adopting a worst case for assessment purposes.

6. Following publication of the ES and in response to advice from Natural England, a review has been carried out of ALC survey data undertaken by Atkins for the A14 Ellington to Fen Ditton Environmental Statement published in October 2009. (http://iprojects.costain.com/a14_public_area/Public/DVD1.html)

7. These point source data were obtained from sampling at higher resolution than the original 1988 work by MAFF that underpins the provisional ALC mapping considered in the ES. The Atkins 2009 work covers much of the route of the scheme, but not ancillary areas such as the borrow pits.

8. As part of this review, Highways England consultants have overlain the Atkins 2009 sample data against the provisional ALC mapping for comparison.

9. The comparative analysis showed that:

    - Much of the soil identified as Grade 2 in the provisional ALC mapping has been assessed in the Atkins 2009 data as Grade 3a. This is largely due to the identification of wetness limitations recorded during the Atkins 2009 survey. Nevertheless, the land is graded as BMV land using either dataset.
    - There is very little land surveyed as Grade 3b by Atkins, with Grade 3b land making up only 5% of the total Grade 3a and Grade 3b combined samples.
    - The total percentage of samples identified as being BMV land (Grade 2 and Grade 3a) by Atkins was 94.9% of all samples on agricultural land. This is very similar to that proportion of land assumed in the ES from the provisional ALC mapping (99.5% of all affected agricultural land).

10. Consequently, the conclusions on the significance of impact based on the provisional ALC mapping as presented in the ES remain valid and are considered to be robust. Natural England have confirmed to Highways England that they agree that consideration of the Atkins 2009 data does not materially change the conclusions relating to the amount of BMV land lost. This point is noted in the Statement of Common Ground with Natural England.

11. As noted above, the Atkins 2009 data set does not fully cover the area of the scheme. Highways England will require their contractors to undertake preconstruction soil surveys to identify the grades of affected land where these data do not exist and to inform the mitigation provisions required by the Code of Construction Practice (ES Appendix 20.2, Volume 6.3) and the Soils Management Strategy (ES Appendix 12.2, Volume 6.3). As noted in response to Written Question 1.7.3, Highways England is currently in consultation with Natural England to further develop this approach in line with their advice.

Question 1.7.2

NPPF para. 112 states that local planning authorities should take into account the economic and other benefits of the BMV agricultural land while para 5.68 of NPS states that applicants should identify any effects and seek to minimise impacts on soil quality, taking into account any mitigation measures proposed. Can the applicant demonstrate how proposals have sought to minimise the use of BMV land and what mitigation measures have been proposed.

Response

12. In developing the proposed scheme, Highways England has sought to minimise the footprint of the scheme thus reducing the permanent loss of the best and most versatile (BMV) land, and ensure that any soils that are disturbed and displaced by the proposed scheme are re-used sustainably.

13. For the purposes of the *ES*, the Provisional Agricultural Land Classification for England data at 1:250,000 scale available through the Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside ($MAGIC_5$) was used. This has been digitised from the published 1:250,000-scale map and provides a breakdown of ALC in the case of the scheme at Grade 2, Grade 3 (Subgrades 3a and 3b combined), Grade 4 and non-agricultural land. Within this classification Grades 2 and 3a are considered to be best and most versatile (BMV) soils. As Subgrade 3a (BMV) land could not be differentiated at the time of preparation of the *ES*, it was conservatively assumed that all land at Grade 3 was BMV land. This is explained as a limitation to assessment in the *ES* at paragraph 16.2.26 (*document reference 6.1*).

14. Figure 16.1 of the *Environmental Statement Figures (document reference 6.2)* shows the Agricultural Land Classification (ALC), illustrating that the scheme would affect ALC Grade 2 land as well as ALC Grade 3 land. Thus, given the high quality of agricultural land in the area, some loss of BMV land is unavoidable and this is recognised in paragraph 16.5.4 of the *ES (document reference 6.1)*. Route selection and scheme design have therefore sought to keep the footprint of the Scheme to a practical minimum. A description of the scheme is outlined in the *ES* at chapter 3 and consideration of the main alternatives at chapter 4 (*document reference 6.1*).

15. As part of the scheme, mitigation will involve the return of land temporarily required during construction to agricultural use (minimising loss of agricultural land) and the implementation of a soil management strategy (ensuring soils are used sustainably).

16. Construction and operational impacts on agricultural land are considered in chapter 16, section 16.4, of the *ES (document reference 6.1).* Construction land includes land required to construct but not operate the scheme, for example borrow pits or land required for materials storage. Earthworks, borrow pits, soil storage areas, compounds and haul routes are described in chapter 3, section 3.11, of the *ES.*

17. Section 16.5 of the *ES* outlines mitigation built into the design of the scheme or which would be implemented during construction of the scheme as detailed in the code of construction practice (CoCP) and referenced in the *ES* in Appendix 20.2 *(document reference 6.3).* Given that it is recognised that some loss of BMV land is unavoidable, mitigation to protect the sustainability of soils concentrates on returning land to agricultural use within temporary construction areas including, but not limited to, borrow pits, construction compounds and haul roads *(ES* paragraph 16.5.6 *document reference 6.1)*. The assessment of impact on agricultural soil has been undertaken in accordance with good practice guidance and the National Planning Policy Framework. These include *Safeguarding our Soils: A Strategy for England* (Defra 2009), *Technical Information Note 049* (TIN049) (Natural England, 2009), the *Code of Practice for the Sustainable Use of Soils on Construction Sites* (Defra, 2009) and *Good Practice Guides for Handling Soils* (MAFF 2000). Additionally, DMRB Vol 11 Stage 3 guidance indicates consideration should be given to the return of BMV land to agriculture.

18. In fulfilling the requirements of the good practice guidance, it is proposed that the scheme includes restoration of borrow pits to agriculture where possible. Borrow Pit 5 would be restored largely to agricultural use and Borrow Pit 6 would be partly restored to agricultural use. Full details are provided in appendix 3.3 of the *ES (document reference 6.3)*. It is noted that minerals legislation in relation to restoration and aftercare will apply and restoration proposals should be cognisant of Minerals Planning Practice Guidance in addition to the soils guidance referred to above.

19. Additionally, the *ES* includes measures relating to soil handling and earth works that will protect fertile soils, control soil movement and restoration, return land within temporary construction areas to agriculture and implement biosecurity advice and actions. This approach is set out in the Soil Management Strategy (appendix 12.2 of the *ES, document reference 6.3*) and referenced in the Code of Construction Practice (appendix 20.2 of the *ES, document reference 6.3*). Along with the ALC information, the Soil Management Strategy informs the detailed specification and control of soil movement and restoration during construction of the scheme. The development of the Soil Management Strategy and detailed mitigation to protect soils and maximise the use of surplus soils is explained further in the response to Q1.7.3.

Question 1.7.3

Natural England has requested that a detailed Soil Resources Plan informed by a Soil Resources Survey would be needed to demonstrate how soil resources would be protected during development and how temporarily affected land would be restored to agriculture. What progress has been made to address this?

Response

20. Highways England is currently addressing comments received from Natural England following their review of the *Soils Management Strategy* (appendix 12.2 of the *ES, document reference 6.3*), including their request that a detailed Soil Resources Plan is prepared and that this is informed by a Soils Resources Survey. These issues were discussed with Natural England on 21 April 2015, as documented in the proposed Statement of Common Ground between Highways England and Natural England. A 'response to comments' document was issued to Natural England on 27 May 2015 setting out how all of their comments are to be taken on board.

21. In response to these comments, Highways England is in the process of preparing a Technical Annex to supplement the existing Soils Management Strategy prepared as part of the *ES (*appendix 12.2 *document reference 6.3)*. This Technical Annex will set out proposals for the soil resources survey and the preparation of detailed soil resource plans by the appointed Highways England contractors. The document will provide:

    - Consideration of the Atkins Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) dataset (2009) which covers much, but not all, of the scheme area.
    - Proposals for new ALC surveys to supplement the Atkins 2009 data set at locations where there are gaps in the data and this relates to land to be returned to agriculture.
    - Clarification on the scope of the soil resources survey including:
        - Soil type
        - Soil profile characteristics (topsoil and subsoil)
        - Soil nutrient analysis requirements
        - Soil pest and diseases (biosecurity) analysis
        - Soil contamination
        - Reporting requirements
    - Clarification on the scope of the soil resource plans including:
        - Summary of findings from the soil resource survey
        - Suitability of re-use (topsoils and subsoils)
        - Handling requirements (topsoils and subsoils)
        - Storage requirements and locations (topsoils and subsoils)

- Haul routes
- Soil budget and stockpile schedule (topsoils and subsoils)
- Supervision processes

- Reference to all appropriate guidance and best practice that will protect the sustainability of soils and ensure compliance with legislation.

22. Natural England is satisfied (as recorded in the SoCG) that the soil resources survey will be secured by the Technical Annex of the Soils Management Strategy. Highways England will continue to consult with Natural England as the detail of this approach is developed and will submit a SoCG to the Examining Authority for Deadline 3 of the Examination, 26 June 2015. The Soils Management Strategy, including the Technical Annex, will in turn be secured through the Code of Construction Practice (CoCP), compliance with which is required by requirement 3 of the draft Development Consent Order (DCO).

Question 1.7.4

ES Table 16.12 provides a summary of effects on community facilities and private property after mitigation. The applicant is requested to provide details of the effects without mitigation.

Response

Overview

23. Impacts considered within Chapter 16, Community and Private Assets, of the *Environmental Statement (ES) (document reference 6.1)* on community facilities and private property are largely in regard to severance and land take. The design process, informed by traffic modelling, consultation, environmental impact assessment, and professional judgement, has sought to minimise land take and severance where practicable.

Mitigation of effects

24. Mitigation for these impacts is largely designed within the scheme ('embedded mitigation'), such as access, rights of way, and the route alignment, and so a pre-mitigation assessment has not been reported in the ES in regard to these elements. Where land take and demolition is required for the construction and/or operation of the scheme, compensation will be paid in accordance with the relevant legislation and guidance; however, this is not considered environmental mitigation. Within Chapter 16 of the ES, mitigation of impacts on community facilities and private property is described as follows:

25. *"Effects from permanent severance and land take on community facilities, private property and development land have been reduced as far as practicable through the design process.*

26. *Likely effects on businesses would be mitigated by providing essential access for businesses and community facilities throughout the construction period or at least during the normal operating hours of the businesses and facilities. The use of appropriate construction phasing as well as providing adequate signage to direct traffic to businesses which stand to lose out from passing trade would also reduce negative impacts.*

27. *Pedestrian routes in local communities would benefit from reduced severance as new crossings are provided over the existing road way and pedestrian routes are maintained across the new sections of road. Where access is disrupted during and after construction, alternative routes would be provided. The potential mitigation of impacts on pedestrians and other travellers is discussed in Chapter 15.*

28. During construction, mitigation measures would be applied to control noise impact of the scheme on nearby private property and community facilities, including use of noise screens and low noise equipment. During operation, the addition of substantial earth bunding and acoustic fences positioned between the scheme and properties, and the use of a low noise surfacing for the carriageway, would be implemented as appropriate. See Chapter 14 for information on this subject."

29. In addition to the mitigation mentioned above, mitigation discussed in regard to Air Quality (Chapter 8 of the Environmental Statement), and Landscape (Chapter 10 of the Environmental Statement), could also be relevant to some receptors. Furthermore, mitigation found within the Code of Construction Practice applies to community facilities and private property in general.

30. It should be noted that the Community and Private Assets chapter of the ES does not explicitly consider the effects from impacts covered in other chapters individually on community facilities and private property receptors as to do so would be double counting the results of those chapters; however it does implicitly consider them in terms of the overall effects on the viability of these receptors as impacted by the scheme.

Effects without mitigation

31. Table 7.1 below outlines the community facilities and private property receptors assessed as likely to be affected (receptors assessed as likely to have negligible significance of effect are not included). The nature of impact, pre-mitigation significance of effect, relevant mitigation and residual significance of effect are reported in the table in regard to impacts resulting from the layout of the scheme and from construction works, such as land take, access and business viability. Table 7.1 does not include impacts such as noise which are covered in other chapters of the ES.

32. In order to produce a concise Environmental Statement, only post-mitigation (residual) effects were reported as pre-mitigation significance of effects is largely similar. This similarity arises because it is the development of the scheme design itself which has the major mitigating influence on land take and access effects. Other forms of mitigation for these effects have limited influence in reducing significance of effect.

33. For more information on the pre-mitigation effects from topics covered by other chapters and the mitigation to be employed, see the response to Question 1.14.3 for a summary, or the respective chapters for the full assessments.

Table 7.1: Community facilities and private property receptors

Receptor	Nature of impact	Sensitivity of receptor	Pre-mitigation significance of effect	Relevant mitigation	Residual significance of effect
	Community facilities				
Offord and Buckden Angling Society	The scheme would cross the river Great Ouse at a point where the 250 member society has fishing rights which may cause disturbance to the ability to fish at this point.	Medium	Slight adverse	No mitigation	Slight adverse
Cambridge Services	Access to be maintained through new layout, loss of approximately 20%. of potentially developable property along verge.	Medium	Moderate adverse	Mitigation within scheme design	Moderate adverse
Cambridge City Crematorium	New access route would lead to slight improvement in ease of	High	Neutral	Mitigation within scheme design	Slight beneficial
Cambridgeshire Constabulary HQ	New road to pass behind Constabulary which would result in a loss of approximately 20% of the property including car park and workshop building with potential implications for future development	High	Moderate adverse	No mitigation	Moderate adverse
Huntingdon Fire Service	New layout may increase traffic at access point.	High	Slight adverse	No mitigation	Slight adverse
	Golf courses				

Receptor	Nature of impact	Sensitivity of receptor	Pre-mitigation significance of effect	Relevant mitigation	Residual significance of effect
Hemingford Abbot Golf Club	The viability of the golf club as a business may benefit from reduced lorry traffic along the existing A14 resulting in improved amenity for golfers and potentially increased	Medium	Slight beneficial	No mitigation	Slight beneficial
Menzies Cambridge Hotel and Golf Course	Negative amenity impact during construction may be sufficient to reduce patronage affecting business viability.	Medium	Moderate adverse	Construction impacts to be mitigated in line with the Code of Construction Practice and mitigation proposed in Chapters 8 and 14 on Air Quality and Noise and Vibration	Slight adverse
	Community land				
Westside Common	Reduction of traffic along former A14 may improve access to park.	Medium	Slight beneficial	No mitigation	Slight beneficial
Bar Hill Parish Council land at Bar Hill Junction	Land take to be returned to the Council but a change in the layout of the green field is possible.	Low	Slight adverse	Mitigation within scheme design	Slight adverse
Trinity College wood	Whole of wooded plot to be lost to land take.	Low	Moderate adverse	No mitigation	Moderate adverse
	Residential property				
Grafham Cottages, Buckden	Demolition of two cottages.	High	Major adverse	No mitigation	Major adverse

Receptor	Nature of impact	Sensitivity of receptor	Pre-mitigation significance of effect	Relevant mitigation	Residual significance of effect
Kasauli, Buckden	Residential property, access along Brampton road impacted by A14 exit across the street.	High	Slight adverse	Mitigation within scheme design	Slight adverse
Hill Rise, Buckden	Residential property, access along Brampton road impacted by A14 exit across the street.	High	Slight adverse	Mitigation within scheme design	Slight adverse
Orchard View, Buckden	Residential property, access along Brampton road impacted by A14 exit across the street.	High	Slight adverse	Mitigation within scheme design	Slight adverse
Wayside, Boxworth	Residential property to be demolished.	High	Major adverse	No mitigation	Major adverse
Hill Farm Cottages, Lolworth	Residential property to lose approximately 10% of plot.	High	Slight adverse	Mitigation within scheme design - improved safer access off of local road.	Slight adverse
Western of three properties between Huntingdon railway station car park and existing A14, Huntingdon	New access road to pass in front of property creating severance with rest of neighbourhood and green space to south of road.	High	Slight adverse	No mitigation	Slight adverse

Receptor	Nature of impact	Sensitivity of receptor	Pre-mitigation significance of effect	Relevant mitigation	Residual significance of effect
Central of three properties between Huntingdon railway station car park and existing A14, Huntingdon	New access road to pass in front of property creating severance with rest of neighbourhood and green space to south of road.	High	Slight adverse	No mitigation	Slight adverse
Eastern of three properties between Huntingdon railway station car park and existing A14, Huntingdon	New access road to pass in front of property creating severance with rest of neighbourhood and green space to south of road.	High	Slight adverse	No mitigation	Slight adverse
	Businesses				
Buckingway Business Park (multiple commercial tenants)	Improvement to access.	Medium	Neutral	Mitigation within scheme design	Slight beneficial
Whippet Coaches Station	Improvement to access.	Medium	Neutral	Mitigation within scheme design	Slight beneficial

Receptor	Nature of impact	Sensitivity of receptor	Pre-mitigation significance of effect	Relevant mitigation	Residual significance of effect
Landro	Impacts from de-trunking of the A14 where raised above property likely to be minimal, although some temporary land take from the property to occur.	Low	Minor adverse	No mitigation	Minor adverse
Barker Storey Matthews	Loss of land, currently a car park but with development potential.	High	Major adverse	No mitigation	Major adverse
Landmans Portaloos	Potentially would lose small area on edge of property.	Medium	Slight adverse	No mitigation	Slight adverse
Goff Petroleum Site	To lose over 30% of property, this may be detrimental to plans for a fuel transfer depot.	Medium	Moderate adverse	Mitigation within scheme design in regard to access to the potential development site	Moderate adverse
	Service stations and garages				
Little Chef KFC and Service Station at Fenstanton	Reduced business possible due to change in traffic patterns.	Medium	Moderate adverse	Provision of adequate signage to direct traffic to businesses	Moderate adverse
Little Chef/ Service station Lolworth	Change to access but small loss of land on edge.	Medium	Slight adverse	No mitigation	Slight adverse
Mason's Garage	Improvement in safety of access.	High	Slight beneficial	Mitigation within scheme design	Slight beneficial
Shell Station, Godmanchester	Reduced business possible due to change in traffic patterns.	Medium	Moderate adverse	Provision of adequate signage to direct traffic to businesses	Moderate adverse

Receptor	Nature of impact	Sensitivity of receptor	Pre-mitigation significance of effect	Relevant mitigation	Residual significance of effect
	Hotels				
Travelodge, Fenstanton	Possible reduction in number of customers due to reduced traffic flow, though improvement in amenity due to diverted traffic may improve appeal to guests somewhat.	Medium	Slight adverse	Provision of adequate signage to direct traffic to businesses	Slight adverse
	Leisure and recreational businesses				
Crystal Lakes Leisure Centre	Slight amenity benefit in reducing traffic in this outdoor activity area.	High	Slight beneficial	No mitigation	Slight beneficial
	Equestrian and animal shelters				
Wood Green Animal Shelters	Impact possible due to traffic which may disturb animals or require them to be moved.	Medium	Slight adverse	Improved access via new junction.	Slight adverse
	Landfill, waste and recycling sites				
Buckden Landfill Site (Aggregate Movements Ltd.)	New scheme layout north of Buckden may make landfill a more attractive repository of materials via access from the new A14.	Low	Slight beneficial	No mitigation	Slight beneficial
	Utilities				

Receptor	Nature of impact	Sensitivity of receptor	Pre-mitigation significance of effect	Relevant mitigation	Residual significance of effect
Network Rail and First Capital Connect	Losses of approximately 25% of verge land to land take including parking spaces, improved access provided.	High	Moderate adverse	Mitigation within scheme design - new access provided	Minor adverse
Anglian Water	Losses of approximately 15% of property to land take.	High	Slight adverse	No mitigation	Slight adverse
	Public houses				
King William IV, Fenstanton	Less patronage possible due to change in traffic patterns, though most customers likely to be local.	Medium	Slight adverse	Provision of adequate signage to direct traffic to businesses	Slight adverse
	Vacant and unused				
Area of Gravel Pits (west of river Great Ouse)	Loss of nature conservation value and informal fishing due to scheme severing of lake area.	Medium	Moderate adverse	No mitigation	Moderate adverse
Trinity Foot	Vacant pub to be demolished.	Low	Moderate adverse	No mitigation	Moderate adverse
Eyre and Denison	Vacant land, to be fully lost to scheme footprint.	Low	Moderate adverse	No mitigation	Moderate adverse
Total UK	Vacant land, to be fully lost to scheme footprint.	Low	Moderate adverse	No mitigation	Moderate adverse
David Ball Group	Vacant building to be demolished near Bar Hill Junction.	Low	Moderate adverse	No mitigation	Moderate adverse

Question 1.7.5

ES Table 16.17 states that 30 farm units would be significantly adversely affected by the scheme with the overall effect likely to be moderately adverse, with details provided in Table 16.11. The applicant is requested to provide details of mitigation proposed for each farm unit and demonstrate how these would be secured.

Response

General approach to farmstead and agricultural mitigation

34. The scheme seeks to minimise impact on individual farmsteads through a design that minimises, as far as is practicable, land take of farm land. Where land take from farmsteads is necessary, the design of the scheme seeks, wherever feasible, to use the land in a temporary capacity so that following construction of the project it can be returned to the farm owner. Soil that is removed from farm land that is temporarily required will be treated as a valuable resource and the handling will follow a Soil Management Strategy. This will ensure that there is no overall deterioration in the quality of the land when it is restored to an agricultural use following the construction phase of the scheme. This approach to soil management is set out in more detail within the Environmental Statement and Code of Construction Practice, as set out below.

Approach to farmstead and agricultural land mitigation set out in the Environmental Statement and Code of Construction Practice

35. The detailed approach to mitigation to be applied to farmsteads and agricultural land across the scheme is found within Chapter 16 of the Environmental Statement, as follows:

36. *"The Thematic Strategy for Soil Protection (European Commission, 2006) and Government thinking set out in the First Soil Action Plan for England 2001-2006 (Defra, 2004), and subsequent Soil Strategy for England (September 2009) has moved away from the protection of land towards the sustainable use of soil. Whilst there is no mitigation for the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land, it is possible to mitigate the effects of the scheme on agriculturally valuable soil. Mitigation identified in this regard focuses primarily on avoidance and proper soil handling.*

37. *Where possible, the loss of agricultural land, particularly that in the best and most versatile category, would be reduced by keeping the footprint to a practical minimum and by appropriate soil handling and earth work procedures to protect fertile soils. Although the design of the scheme reduces the land take required from the best and most versatile agricultural land, due to the high quality of agricultural land in the surrounding area some loss is unavoidable. Restoration of land temporarily used for construction activities to agricultural use would occur where possible.*

38. The quality and quantity of soil on site would be maintained by implementing appropriate techniques for stripping, storing and re-use. This approach would be adopted in a Soil Management Strategy (SMS), which can be found in Appendix 12.2, which would give practical effect to the guidance as set out in the Code of Practice for the Sustainable Use of Soils on Construction Sites (Defra, 2009). The Agricultural Land Classification information presented in this chapter along with the SMS would inform the detailed specification and control of soil movement and restoration during construction of the scheme.

39. A number of accommodation works and mitigation measures have been identified relating to individual farm units to avoid or reduce effects. These are to be applied in general to farms across the scheme and would be implemented during the construction phase of the scheme on individual farm units as follows:

- returning land within temporary construction areas (e.g. haul road, construction compounds, etc.) back to farming in a similar condition as before;
- maintaining access to fields during construction phase;
- provision of access to severed land;
- undertaking work in accordance with the Code of Construction Practice (Appendix 20.2 of the ES) to avoid pollution of natural springs, ditches and brooks on the farm holding; and
- implementing bio-security advice and actions."

40. Impacts not addressed by mitigation (both scheme-wide mitigation as described above and the specific access mitigation discussed below), are considered residual impacts and have informed the assessment of the significance of effect, found within Table 16.12 of the Environmental Statement (the overall finding in regard to farmsteads being a significant adverse effect).

Specific access mitigation for individual farmsteads

41. Mitigation at the individual farmstead level is primarily associated with ensuring that access is maintained to farm land that is severed temporarily or permanently by the scheme. This is primarily secured within the scheme design process. The overall objective is to ensure that the agricultural land can continue to be farmed and that the viability of the farming business is not significantly affected.

42. Farm-specific mitigation, additional to the general mitigation discussed above, is described in Table 7.2 below (attributed to the same Plot number/Farm name categorisation as found in the Environmental Statement in Table 16.11).

Table 7.2: Additional mitigation for individual farmsteads

Plot number	Farm name	Additional mitigation
000a	Huntingdon Life Sciences	No mitigation
001	Brooklands Farm	New access lane provided
001a	Brooklands Farm West	No mitigation
003 005 016 017 018 019 021 022	Harcourt Farm (CCC, Akzo Nobel, National Trust and RNLI)	No Mitigation
004 010	Weybridge Farm	Additional access point provided
006	Lodge Farm	Replacement access provided
008 014 014a	Rectory Farm	Alternative access provided
024 025 026 027 028 029 030	Park Farm	New access provided from south on Grantham Road
031 032	Lodge Farm - Brampton	Access maintained
043	Lodge Farm - Buckden	Two alternative routes to be provided to segregated land to the north
047	Northway Farm	Access maintained
048 049 050	Corpus Christi Farm	Provision of agricultural over-bridge to link the north and south with access points to each plot of land
053 054	Offord Hill Farm	Provision of agricultural over-bridge to link the north and south with access points to each plot of land
055 056	Home Farm	Field access maintained, additional field access points provided

058 061	Debden Top Farm	Access maintained
060a	Bearscroft Farm	Access maintained by reinstating street
062	Lower Debden Farm	Access from north to south to be maintained by reinstatement of street
063	Debden Farm	Access provided to segregated piece of land at south, from Ermine street junction
064	Depden Farm	Access maintained through Ermine street to segregated plots of land
067 068	Depden Lodge Farm	Access maintained just off new roundabout access to A14
069	Top Farm	Access maintained from north, access to southern segregated plot provided off Ermine street
071 072	Topfield Farm	Access unchanged
073	Woolpack Farm	Access maintained off Potton Road provided
074	Linton's Farm	Access provided from Potton Road westwards to segregated plot
076	Oxholme Farm	No mitigation
078	West End Farm	Existing access maintained to small residual plot
079	Gables Farm	Two alternative access routes provided to north and south using Fenstanton Road
082 084 085 088	Model Farm Mount Farm Red Hill Farm	Alternative access over the Conington Road over-bridge from north to south
093 094	Marshall's Farm	Access maintained through reinstatement of New Barns lane, provision of farm access tracks and bridges
101	New Barns Farm and Brickyard Farm East	Access maintained, access to northern segregated section at north, east to west route maintained
102 104	Friesland Farm	Access reinstated from New Farm track via Swavesey Junction
103 108 125	Boxworth End Farm	Access provided off local access road
105 106	Thomas Galon Charity	Access provided off local access road

107	New Barns Farm and Brickyard Farm West	Access route provided from roundabout on southern side of Swavesey Junction
128	Boxworth Farm	No mitigation
130	Clare College Farm and Grange Farm	Replacement access being provided off Robin's Lane
132	Hill Farm	New access off Lolworth over-bridge junction
133	Noon Folly Farm	Access point provided off local access road and Hattons Road
135 141	Hazlewell Farm Slate Hall Farm	Access points maintained
142 144	Slate Hall Farm	Existing access maintained
143	Hacker's Fruit Farm	New access route off local access road
145	Scotland Farm	New access off Oakington road roundabout south of the Dry Drayton junction
147	Poplar Farm (St John's College)	No mitigation
148	Grange Farm	New access off NMU, security measures to be provided
149	Townlands Trust	Access provided off local access road
150	Catch Hall	New access points provided off new lane severing plots
152 155 156 157 158	Trinity College (Ladysmith Farm)	Access provided off local access road
153	University of Cambridge	Existing access maintained
164 165	St John's College	New access off NMU, security measures to be provided
169	Bresden UK Limited	No mitigation
186	Garden House Properties	No mitigation
209 210 225 226	Freeman's Charity of Huntingdon (including Mill Common and View Common)	Access provided off new link road through View Common, access maintained to Mill Common

43. Schedule 2, paragraph 3 of the draft DCO requires the authorised development to be carried out in accordance with the provisions of the Code of Construction Practice. The Code of Construction Practice refers to the Soil Management Strategy in Appendix 12.2 of the ES as outlining the approach to the management of topsoil resources expected of construction contractors.

44. Section 8.2 of the Code of Construction Practice includes requirements on the main contractors to mitigate potential impacts on agricultural resources. This includes implementing appropriate measures in accordance with *Protecting our Water, Soil and Air, A Code of Good Agricultural Practice for farmers, growers and land managers* (Defra, 2009). Additionally, mitigation in regard to individual access is provided for as part of the scheme design (informed by professional judgement, consultation and environmental impact assessment) within the DCO, Rights of Way and Access Plans.

Question 1.7.6

In Table 16.17 of the ES it states that the regional economy would benefit from the creation of 800 – 1600 additional jobs to the local region during construction of the proposed scheme. Please set out the extent to which this assessment is agreed by your local authority, identifying areas where you disagree with the analysis and providing reasons.

Response

45. This question is not directed to Highways England and a response is therefore not provided.

Question 1.7.7

In the Case for the Scheme it is stated that the proposed scheme is forecast to deliver significant economic benefits associated with reduced travel times together with greater journey time reliability and wider impacts associated with economic activity and business growth. Please comment on the construction and post construction effect of the proposal on the local economy in Cambridgeshire and linkages with neighbouring counties / regions.

Response

46. This question is not directed to Highways England and a response is therefore not provided.

Question 1.7.8

Table 16.14 of the ES summarises the effect of the proposed scheme on community severance. To what extent have local authorities and Parish Councils been involved in such an assessment and are they in agreement with the applicant over the effects of the proposal? If not, why not?

Response

47. This question is not directed to Highways England and a response is therefore not provided.

Question 1.7.9

A number of Interested Parties have suggested that the A14 Huntingdon Viaduct should be retained. Please set out in more detail why it is proposed to remove the Huntingdon viaduct.

Response

Executive summary

48. It is proposed to remove the viaduct for principally the following reasons:

- Removal supports Huntingdon District Council's strategic regeneration objectives, as articulated in the West Area Action Plan, as well as enhancing the character of the Huntingdon Conservation Area;
- Removal is a condition of local authority financial contributions to the scheme;
- Removal would improve air quality in the town as a consequence of the redirection of strategic traffic to the new bypass;
- Removal enables improved road connections within the town, to the existing link roads, notably to the railway station, and also to the hospital and secondary school for those travelling from Godmanchester;
- Removal improves accessibility of the town for local travellers;
- Due to continued use by strategic traffic, its retention would not resolve congestion at Brampton Hut and Spittals Interchange;
- There is an ongoing annual maintenance cost of £342,000 whilst the viaduct remains; and
- The economic life of the existing viaduct is ten years only in its current use, due to anticipated increased traffic requiring widening which could only be achieved through demolition and rebuild. This would require additional land take in an urban area.

The need for the scheme

49. The current alignment of the A14 has resulted from the construction and subsequent amalgamation of a series of bypasses between the M1 and Ipswich. Previously named the A604, the A14 was developed into a dual carriageway between Bar Hill and Huntingdon in the 1970s and the Huntingdon road viaduct over the East Coast Mainline railway was opened in 1975. The Cambridge northern bypass, previously named the A45, was also built in the 1970s. In addition to bypassing urban areas, the A14 between Cambridge and Huntingdon connects the A1(M) motorway to the North of England with the M11 motorway to London and the South-East. It provides a strategic link between the Midlands and East Anglia as well as linking with the east coast ports.

50. Traffic counts carried out in 2014 by Highways England, assessing annual average daily traffic, identified that around 71,000 vehicles currently use the A14 between Swavesey and Bar Hill every day. This is forecast to rise to 86,000 vehicles per day by 2020, which is significantly above the design standard of 66,000 vehicles a day used when the road was built, as set out within the Department of Transport document Highway Link Design TA43/84.

Options considered

51. Consideration to improving the A14 between Bar Hill and Huntingdon goes back to the late 1980s when the White Paper “Roads for Prosperity” introduced a widening scheme. The Cambridge to Huntingdon Multi-Modal Study (CHUMMS) undertaken in the early 2000s considered a number of options and concluded that the best option as part of a package of measures involved the removal of the Huntingdon viaduct. The Ellington to Fen Ditton scheme was withdrawn in 2010 on the grounds of unaffordability at the time of the Financial Crisis but the Government recognised that the problem of congestion on the A14 needed to be addressed and announced a further study. The current scheme emerged as a result of the Department for Transport (DfT) study carried out in 2011 and 2012. During the course of the DfT study, the Government decided that tolls would be used to part-fund the project. In addition, agreement was reached with the local authorities to contribute £100million to the cost of the scheme.

52. Output 2 of the study considered a long list of options which included consideration of the widening of the existing A14 and with it the retention of the viaduct. It concluded that, whilst it would increase capacity along the route and ease congestion at Girton Interchange, it would not resolve congestion at Brampton Hut or Spittals Interchange, it would not remove strategic traffic from close proximity to Huntingdon, it would exacerbate congestion on the Cambridge Northern Bypass if not mitigated and would require widening of the viaduct. This option was not shortlisted although an option which retained the viaduct as part of a de-trunked A14 was (Option 5).

53. Output 3 put forward six options and these were presented through a public consultation in September and October 2013, together with a seventh option which comprised a combination of Options 3 and 5. This seventh option was put forward as the favoured option and the only option on which tolling could be applied; Option 5 retained the existing A14 as a trunk road through Huntingdon together with retention of the viaduct, although in combination with a southern bypass.

54. The retention of the existing A14 as a trunk road and the retention of the viaduct was not progressed as this did not support the following objectives of the scheme:

    - Combat congestion: whilst the new bypass would provide a reliable route between Swavesey and Ellington which would be uninterrupted by junctions, it was expected that a significant proportion of people would continue to use the existing A14 and that this would increase over time as the level of traffic on the road network increases, with an expected need to widen the viaduct in order to cope with demand. As a consequence, congestion would remain an issue, notably at Spittals Junction and Bar Hill.
    - Connect people: retention of the viaduct would prevent connection of the A14 with the link roads within Huntingdon. Access would remain as existing; from Spittals Interchange to the West and the Godmanchester Junction to the East. A proportion of heavy goods vehicles would continue to use the existing route. It was expected that the level of traffic would be such that environmental benefits, such as reduced CO2 and NO2 emissions would not be realised and that speed restrictions may be required in future years to avoid exceedances.
    - Create a positive legacy: in addition to high levels of pollution resulting from the volume of traffic, the viaduct causes severance within Huntingdon which conflicts with the town's growth objectives as articulated by Huntingdonshire District Council in its West Area Action Plan.

55. In addition, it is the view of Highways England that the age and condition of the viaduct would not support its widening, if retained as a strategic route; consequently there would be a need for demolition and rebuilding, estimated to be required within ten years. Widening of the A14 would also require land take within an urban area, with consequential impact on properties.

56. Following the December 2013 announcement not to toll the scheme, the seven options were re-assessed and a detailed comparison made between Option 7 (the favoured option) and Option 5 (the next best performing option). It was concluded that Option 7 offered an effective, long-term strategic solution to the problems of traffic congestion on the A14 between Cambridge and Huntingdon. The scheme represents high value for money and provides higher journey time reliability benefits than other options. Option 5 would have provided short-term economic benefits, in that the bypass could be constructed as two lanes, not three, however, these were outweighed by the need for further improvement anticipated within a decade, further disruption during a second phase of construction, and the loss of environmental benefits in terms of road traffic noise reduction and air quality improvements in Huntingdon; and so this proposal was rejected.

57. Option 7, which includes the removal of the viaduct, is considered to best meet the objectives of the scheme; combatting congestion, unlocking economic growth, improving local connectivity, improving safety and creating a positive legacy.

A brief history of the viaduct

58. Constructed in 1975, the viaduct crossing the East Coast Mainline railway in Huntingdon has been showing signs of deterioration for more than 10 years and Highways England has been following a strategy of careful monitoring and targeted intervention over a prolonged period. Following the withdrawal of the Ellington to Fen Ditton scheme in 2010, which included the demolition of the viaduct, a new approach to the long-term maintenance of the structure was required. It was necessary to carry out strengthening works particularly to support the central suspended span and to extend the life of the structure, subject to sufficient ongoing maintenance, into the foreseeable future.

59. The work, which was carried out in 2013, has cost approximately £7.5m. It comprised the introduction of steelwork below the existing structure in order to support the central suspended span and to strengthen joints. An effect of this work has been to reduce the headroom beneath the viaduct which has required the introduction of road narrowing measures on Brampton Road Bridge.

60. Subsequent to repair, approximately £342,000 is currently spent each year on risk-mitigation measures and the monitoring of the viaduct. As a consequence of these works, the structural condition of the viaduct is considered satisfactory. However the structure will require an enhanced level of monitoring over and above what would be expected for this type of structure.

Environmental benefits in removal of viaduct

61. The Transport Assessment (document reference 7.1) states a reduction in traffic on the A14 between the viaduct and Spittals Interchange from 78,600 to 27,600 annual average daily traffic (AADT) flows in the opening year of the scheme. If the viaduct were to remain then a proportion of this traffic would continue to use the existing route, with consequential noise and air quality impacts.

62. The Huntingdon area is currently designated as an air quality management area where annual mean NO2 concentrations exceed the relevant air quality objective. Huntingdon is the main area where improvements in air quality are predicted to occur as a result of the scheme; the re-routing of traffic onto the new road takes traffic away from the urban areas of Huntingdon.

63. In addition, the continued use of the existing route by HGVs would detrimentally impact on the safety objectives of the scheme in that a proportion of the strategic traffic would continue to pass through an urban area rather than make use of the bypass.

Economic development within Huntingdon

64. There are significant non-monetised benefits from removal of the viaduct through addressing severance issues that the viaduct creates and also through improved access to Huntingdon town centre and the railway station via the proposed new link roads. These potential benefits reflect the Huntingdon West Area Action Plan, prepared by Huntingdonshire District Council and adopted in 2011, which sets out a plan for development of West Huntingdon and diversification of the local economy based on the removal of the viaduct. Within the vision statement for the West Area Action Plan it says:

65. ‘New and improved transport routes will enable better, easier and more sustainable travel patterns enabling new land uses that will reflect the improved accessibility of the location. The new routes will help to break down the barrier caused by the main roads and enhance the connections and inter-relationships between this area and the rest of the town centre.’

66. The removal of the viaduct and the creation of local roads, as set out within the proposed scheme, are essential to the achievement of the vision.

67. The viaduct currently passes through the Huntingdon Conservation Area; its removal would therefore enhance the character of the conservation area.

Local connections and access

68. The proposed scheme includes the creation of a link road that connects the de-trunked A14 to the East of Huntingdon with that to the West via a new road across Mill Common, the Brampton Road making use of the Brampton Road Bridge over the east Coast Mainline railway, and a new road crossing Views Common. This retains an East/West passage for vehicles, other than heavy goods vehicles, through Huntingdon and supports the scheme objective of connecting people by helping to put the right traffic on the right roads. It improves access to the railway station and, in connecting with the recently constructed link road running parallel with the railway and the inner ring road within Huntingdon, it improves accessibility to the town centre. Access to the hospital and secondary school via Brampton Road Bridge is maintained.

69. The removal of the viaduct and the creation of local link roads would also improve access into Huntingdon for residents of Godmanchester, providing them with an alternative to the B1044 which crosses the Old Town Bridge, so reducing traffic levels on this historic structure. This again supports the scheme objective of connecting people.

Local authority support

70. For all of the above reasons, local authorities in Huntingdon and Cambridgeshire have stated that they would not support any scheme which retained the A14 viaduct over the East Coast Mainline railway as it would be a constraint to plans for local regeneration and economic development and in conflict with their local plans.