

The A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon Improvement Scheme.

Representations on behalf of Elsworth Parish Council.

1. The stated objectives of the Scheme are (*inter alia*)¹:
 - 1.1. To '*relieve traffic congestion*'. (3.2.1)
 - 1.2. 'To '*separate strategic through traffic... from local traffic*' (3.2.2)
 - 1.3. '*at a local level [to achieve] improved flow of traffic and greater journey time reliability*' (3.3.3)
 - 1.4. To '*keep heavy through traffic away from urban and village roads that were never intended to cope with today's traffic.*' (3.4.1)
 - 1.5. To benefit rural villages in the Cambridge to Huntingdon corridor by '*[reducing] much of the A14 avoidance ("rat running") which causes, congestion and negative social and environmental impacts on those villages, such as noise and pollution*' (3.4.3.)
 - 1.6. To improve safety on local side roads '*as a consequence of lower traffic volumes*' (3.5.4)
 - 1.7. To '*create a positive legacy*' centred on '*a recognition by the Highways Agency that a project on this scale has impacts that extend beyond the transport and economic case, as well as the environmental impacts and their mitigation*'.
2. The Scheme also purports to satisfy the core planning principles of the National Planning Policy Framework by: "*recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities within it*"
3. In our opinion, the Scheme fails to meet most of its stated objectives and the

¹ According to Chapter 3 of the Highways Agency's '*A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon Improvement Scheme - Case for the Scheme*' issued in December 2014

relevant NPPF principles for the reasons given in our previous summary representation² and set out in more detail below.

4. Traffic Issues

4.1. It appears to us that the Applicant has designed the Scheme as a stand alone strategic road without any, or any sufficient, consideration of the Scheme in its local context or of the impact on the local communities.

4.2. In our submission, the chief defects of the Scheme are:

4.2.1. **the failure to provide an all ways interchange at the A14/M11/A428 junction at Girton.**

4.2.2. **The Swavesey Junction.**

4.2.3. **The reduction of the A428 from two lanes to one at the new Girton Interchange**

4.3. **The Girton Interchange.** The failure to provide an all ways junction at the Girton Interchange will have significantly detrimental effects on traffic roads in the surrounding area which are already severely congested . In particular:

4.3.1. eastbound traffic on the A428 cannot join the A14 Westbound;

4.3.2. nor can it turn South onto the M11

4.3.3. such traffic thus leaves the A428 at the Madingley Mulch roundabout to use the A1303 (Madingley Hill) to reach the M11. This leads to serious congestion and delay, particularly in the rush hour.

Because of this:

4.3.4. motorists try to avoid the blockage by 'rat running' through Madingley village (if travelling into Cambridge) or by 'rat running' via Long Road to Comberton and then the B1046 to Barton (if travelling to the biomedical campus or the business parks South of Cambridge).

4.3.5. Elsworth is a member of a Coalition of Local Councils which has made representations on these very traffic issues to South Cambridgeshire District Council in relation to its current Local Plan

² Relevant Representation 210

(which is now under Examination). A copy of those representations, together with the accompanying traffic survey, is attached as Appendix I. The problems referred to in these documents will be exacerbated by other features of the Scheme. In particular:

4.4. The Swavesey Junction.

4.4.1. In contrast to other existing A14 junctions which, under the Scheme, will either be closed or restricted, the Swavesey Junction appears to be intended as a major interchange on the new road. The Highways Agency's own forecast is of a staggering **252% increase in traffic at this junction by 2035**. This is nearly ten times the increase forecast at any other junction on the existing A14.³

4.4.2. The availability of all ways access to the new A14 at this junction, coupled with the absence of (i) Westbound access from the Girton Interchange and (ii) Eastbound access from the Godmanchester Junction means that the Swavesey Junction will become a magnet for rat-runners seeking to avoid the chronic congestion on the A428 and/or those living West of Cambridge and East of the A1198 seeking to join the A14 Westbound.

4.5. **The A428 will be reduced from two lanes to one at the new Girton Interchange.** Without doubt, this will lead to serious congestion at peak times.⁴

5. Conclusions.

5.1. In our submission, **the above features of the new A14 render the Scheme unsustainable**. As proposed, **the Scheme will fail to meet its objectives** set out in paragraphs 1.1 to 1.6 above. On the contrary, the Scheme will have the opposite effect: *'the A14 avoidance ("rat running"); the 'congestion and negative social and environmental impacts ... , such as noise and pollution'* in villages such as Elsworth and its neighbouring parishes including Boxworth, Knapwell and Bourn will be increased, rather than reduced.

³ We have asked the Highways Agency for an explanation of the increase but have not yet received an answer.

⁴ Strictly speaking the slip road is two lanes, but one of them is hatched off, so in practice only one lane is available to traffic.

6. **'A Positive Legacy'**

6.1. For Elsworth, and surrounding villages, the legacy of the Scheme will be anything but positive. **The Highways Agency has failed to recognize the 'impacts' of the Scheme** *'that extend beyond the transport and economic case, as well as the environmental impacts and their mitigation'*, **contrary to its own and the Government's strategic objectives**

7. **Modifications.**

7.1. We are not opposed to the Scheme in principle but, as presently proposed, it unsustainable and unacceptable. It could easily be modified to overcome the problems we have described and, in our submission, the Planning Inspectorate should reject the Scheme as drafted and require the Highways Agency to resubmit it in a satisfactorily modified form.

14 June 2015.

Appendix 1

{Bourn Traffic Survey to be added}

ANNEX 1
Coalition of Parish Councils
Traffic Survey

Introduction

1. The Coalition of Parish Councils undertook a traffic survey to assess current morning rush-hour traffic flows through the villages in the A428-A603 corridor west of Cambridge. We surveyed traffic at over 70 different sites, mostly in Late September and October 2014. The surveys were undertaken by trained volunteers. We surveyed at each site on either one or two days. We also recorded queuing times at key bottlenecks.
2. The survey methodology was designed by a specialist Transport Consultant⁷. We followed Department for Transport (DfT) guidance on traffic surveys. We carried out the surveys from 07.15 to 09.15 on either a Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday morning in what the DfT considers 'normal' months for traffic surveys. We distinguished between (i) cars, motorbikes and light goods vehicles and (ii) heavy goods vehicles and buses, but, in this analysis we present data of combined flows.
3. The results of the traffic survey are shown on the map at Figure 1. Figures are rounded to the nearest 50 vehicles, unless otherwise stated.

Key Findings

4. The main findings of the traffic survey are summarised in this section.
5. **Heaviest traffic flows.** The heaviest traffic flows were on the A 428 eastbound, on the A603 eastbound just before the M11, on the B1046 between Comberton and the A 603 and on Madingley Hill eastbound. These are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Heaviest traffic flows

	Road	2 hourly flow (07.15-09.15)	Average hourly flow
	A428		
1	A428 eastbound just east of Caxton Gibbett	3,100	1,550
2	A428 eastbound just before the A1303 sliproad	4,300	2,150
	A603/B1046		
3	B1046 between Comberton and the A603 at Barton	1,300	650
4	A 603 eastbound, just before the M11	2,700	1,350
	A1303 – Madingley Hill		
5	A1303 Madingley Hill just east of the Coton turn	1,550	775
6	A1303 Madingley Hill eastbound just east of the M11	2,050	1,025

⁷ Karl von Weber of LvW Highways Ltd.

6. **Traffic congestion.** The heaviest traffic congestion is on the A1303 Madingley Hill and the A603/B1046 at Barton. It currently takes:

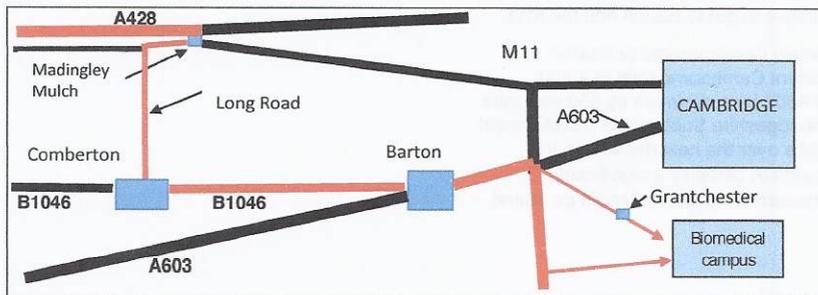
- **Madingley Hill:** 30-45 minutes to complete the 2.4 km (1.5 miles) from the Madingley Mulch roundabout to the M11 in the peak morning rush hours;
- **Barton:** 10-15 minutes to complete the 1.8 km (1.1 miles) through Barton on either the A603 or the B1046/A603 to the roundabout just east of the M11 during the peak morning rush hours.

7. **Traffic diversions caused by inadequate infrastructure.** There are two major infrastructure constraints in the area. These are:

- **The lack of an all-ways interchange at the A14/M11/A428 junction,** which means that eastbound traffic on the A428 (e.g., from the direction of St Neots and Cambourne) heading for the Biomedical Campus and other research parks south of the City cannot turn south on the M11. It thus has to leave the A428 at the Madingley Mulch roundabout and travel down Long Road to Comberton to join the B1046 to Barton and the A603 to get onto the M11, or travel through Grantchester, to the Biomedical Campus;
- **The A1303 from the A428 to the M11 (Madingley Hill),** which has severely limited capacity, resulting in long queues in the morning rush hours. As a result, motorists try to avoid the area by:
 - Queue jumping by 'rat running' through Madingley village to get onto the A1303 lower down, closer to the M11. Some 500 cars each morning do this (250/hour);
 - Avoiding the A1303 by driving south via Long Road to Comberton and then the B1046 to Barton in order to enter Cambridge or to the biomedical campus and other research parks south of the City. Approximately 90% of cars travelling down the A1303 (Madingley Hill) go into Cambridge. Only 10% turn right onto the M11.

8. Currently 900 cars (450/hour) travel down Long Road from Madingley Mulch roundabout to Comberton and the B1046. In Barton, 1300 cars (650/hour) from the B1046 join the A603 eastbound, giving a total flow just before the M11 of 2,700 vehicles (1,350/hour). Other vehicles also join from other directions, at the roundabout east of the M11. Of the total combined flow, 1,200 (600/hour) go into Cambridge, 900 (450/hour) drive through Grantchester and 800 join the M11 southbound, mostly heading towards the biomedical campus. This flow is shown in red in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Route taken by traffic using Long Road to avoid Madingley Hill



that a greater proportion of people in are likely to commute to work in the Biomedical campus and nearby facilities.

14. Add to this a general increase in traffic heading eastbound towards the new employment opportunities via the A603 and B1046, the queues at Barton are bound to get longer. Tailbacks of 30-45 minute, comparable to Madingley Hill today, are likely.

Cambourne commuters also leave the settlement to the South and join the A1198 southbound. Of the 800 vehicles (400/hour) travelling south on the A1198 through Longstowe we estimate 250 (125/hour) come from Cambourne. If West Cambourne and Bourn Airfield go ahead, this figure would probably more than double.

15. In our view, rather than building more houses in the A428 corridor, new housing developments should focus on areas in the south of the City and contiguous parts of South Cambridgeshire. There are three reasons for this:

- these locations are close to the new employment opportunities in the Biomedical campus (e.g., Papworth Hospital, Astra-Zenica and the nearby research parks);
- a denser population in this area would make an efficient and frequent bus service in the area feasible and make it possible for people to cycle and walk to work, thus supporting the planning policy of sustainable transport; and
- this would reduce the need to travel the 10-15 miles from the A428 housing developments, reducing adverse effects on carbon emissions and climate change, also supporting more sustainable development.

The infrastructure developments proposed under the City Deal are inadequate.

16. The first batch of proposed City Deal schemes includes an indicative investment of £87.1 million to provide a busway/segregated bus route from Caxton Gibbett to Queen's Road in Cambridge (schemes 5, 6 and 9). This is the equivalent of 59% of the total first batch City Deal expenditure of £147.1 million.

17. In our view this is an attempt by SCDC to mitigate its own planning mistakes proposed in the Local Plan – specifically West Cambourne and Bourn Airfield developments. If one assumes that half the proposed cost is for these two developments (i.e. £43.55 million) and that the maximum number of 5550 houses are built (2350 in West Cambourne and 3,200 in Bourn Airfield) this is equivalent to an investment of public funds equivalent to £7,850 per house.

18. If this investment made it possible to get people from the new developments to work using sustainable transport, this might be considered a reasonable cost. But it will not do so.

19. **A dedicated buslink from Cambourne to the Queens Road in Cambridge, linked to more park and ride facilities, will not reduce traffic or congestion on the A1303 significantly because bus travel is an unattractive way for most people to travel to work.**

20. The spatial pattern of employment in Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire is dispersed across the city and district. While the bus link may be attractive for people working in the centre of the city (e.g., in the university, retail or offices) most people in Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire work outside the city centre and will still use their cars.

21. The only way in which housing developments in the A428 could possibly be made more viable would be by constructing an all-ways interchange at the A14/M11/A428 junction, enabling eastbound traffic on the A428 to turn south on the M11. The Highways Agency has