

Written Representations on the Application for development consent by the Highways Agency for the improvement of the A14 trunk road between Cambridge to Huntingdon

Sainsbury's Supermarkets Ltd and Sainsbury's Propco B Limited (**Sainsbury's**) made an initial representation to the Planning Inspectorate on 13 March 2015 in response to the application for development consent for the improvement of the A14 trunk road between Cambridge to Huntingdon (the **Scheme**) and in particular, the changes proposed for the following two (2) junctions:

- the form of the Brampton Road/Edison Bell Way junction, resulting in a new link to the current A14 route which is to be de-trunked as part of the Scheme; and
- the Mill Common/Ring Road/Prince's Street and St Mary Street junction.

Sainsbury's does not object to the principle of the Scheme. It supports the Scheme apart from the proposed changes to the above two (2) junctions. Sainsbury's is concerned that the proposed changes to the above two (2) junctions will adversely impact upon its future business operations.

Sainsbury's operates an existing store at St. Germain Walk, Huntingdon, PE29 3FG (situated between Chequers Court and Nursery Road) (the **existing store**) which is proximate to the Mill Common/Ring Road/Prince's Street and St Mary Street junction. On 10 May 2013 Sainsbury's secured planning permission (ref 1001750FUL) for a new development located at land situated north of George Street and West of St Johns Street in Huntingdon (the **new development site**). Planning permission authorises the demolition of existing buildings and structures and the phased development of a new food store (A1) and petrol filling station and provision for a new street (Phase 1) and up to nine (9) units (Classes A1 – A3 of the Use Classes Order) twenty eight (28) residential units and office floor spaces, together with associated car parking and access. The new development site is approximately 3 hectares in areas and is adjacent to Edison Bell Way, north of Brampton Road. Sainsbury's has an interest in the new development site, which is more particularly described as the land under title numbers CB182049, CB101135 and CB286054 and registered at H M Land Registry.

Sainsbury's specific concerns in relation to the impacts of the Scheme are outlined in more detail below.

1. Impact on Business Operations

If the proposed Scheme is approved the highway improvement works at the above two (2) junctions may, unless provision is made to protect the Sainsbury's operations, seriously affect the ability of Sainsbury's to operate from its existing store (or the new development site if a new food store is developed pursuant to the planning permission (ref 1001750FUL)) and deliver the same level of service to its customers.

There are concerns that the highway improvement works proposed for the above two (2) junctions will:

- impinge upon Sainsbury's ability to comply with servicing/delivery restrictions for the existing store and new development site which are contained in its planning permissions and leases;
- result in disruption to and potentially even prevent certain deliveries being made to the existing store and/or new development site; and
- result in road closures that restrict or close access to the existing store or new development site, affecting both service/delivery vehicles and customers

which would adversely impact upon trade.

Impact on the Customer Shopping Experience

If the proposed Scheme is approved the highway improvement works at the above two (2) junctions will, on account of the construction and the operational effects of the revised highway network, directly affect the ability of customers to undertake their usual shopping and associated trips, thus reducing customer satisfaction. In Sainsbury's experience all stores show a fall in sales and customer numbers during disruption, and those numbers do not significantly improve until a significant (but variable) time has passed since the completion of the works. Accordingly, if the proposed Scheme was to be approved it ought to be subject to necessary and appropriate controls to ensure that the unacceptable impacts of the highway improvement works are either removed or sufficiently mitigated effects so that the impact on Sainsbury's customers at the existing store and/or the new development site is minimal.

2. Outstanding Information concerning the traffic impact of the road network

Sainsbury's understand that the Highways Agency has, since the development consent application was made in December, undertaken revisions to its traffic models to reflect changed assumptions and rectify elements of the original model. The revised traffic models in the vicinity of the Brampton Road / Edison Bell Way junction are still to be published by the Highways Agency and as such, the likely effect on the junction and the proposed new development site remains unknown. While Sainsbury's assume the change in overall model flows will have been small, the change in routing choice and traffic distribution cannot be predicted and as such, Sainsbury's is unable to assess the future operation of the junction and the proposed new development site.

The December 2014 Traffic Assessment (**TA**) shows that the operation of the existing Brampton Road/Edison Bell Way junction will be substantially over capacity at 2020 (year of opening) and 2035 (the future forecast year), based on the "Do Nothing Scenario" (set out in Table 7.46). While Sainsbury's notes that two modelling options have been explored, it considers the "non-motorised user-optimised" modelling option to be a more accepted comparison (set out in Table 7.47), which in the TA showed a substantial increase in ratio of flow to capacity (**RTC**) and queuing at the proposed junction. In fact, the TA indicates that predicted queuing on Brampton Road west would be over 200 vehicles in 2020 and 2035 both for AM and PM peak hours (an increase of 141 vehicles compared to 2020 for the existing junction), while on Edison Bell Way the queuing would be over 165 vehicle in 2020 for the PM Peak hour (an increase of 100 vehicles compared to 2020 for the existing junction). Any vehicle queuing on Edison Bell Way will interfere with and adversely impact upon access to the proposed new development site, which has not been addressed in any of the supporting information for the application.

Unless and until the changed assumptions and revised traffic models for the vicinity of the store, including the Brampton Road/Edison Bell Way junction are made available it is not possible for the future operation of this junction to be evaluated by Sainsbury's. The operation of this junction is critical to Sainsbury's assessment of the operation and viability of the new development site.

Similarly, there appears to be no assessment of the Brampton Road/Walden Road (B1514) junction, which could have a knock-on effect in terms of the operation of the new development site.

Conclusions

As outlined above, Sainsbury's does not object in principle to the Scheme. However, it does have concerns about the changes proposed for the above two (2) junctions due to a lack of available information on the likely impacts and how this will be mitigated and managed. Further, the Highways Agency has not sought to offer any undertakings or strategies which seek to mitigate the likely

interference that the highway improvement works will have on Sainsbury's business operations and its customer's shopping experience.

Sainsbury's reserves the right to make further representations once the revised traffic models for the vicinity of the Brampton Road/Edison Bell Way junction and Brampton Road/Walden Road junction are made available, but will, in the meantime, seek to engage with the Highways Agency with a view to:

1. obtaining additional information about the changes proposed for the above two (2) junctions;
2. gauging the potential impacts of the proposed changes on the above two (2) junctions in relation to Sainsbury's business operations and its customer's shopping experience; and
3. reaching a satisfactory agreement with the Highways Agency to ensure that the Scheme is subject to necessary and appropriate controls which will ensure that unacceptable impacts of the highway improvement works are either removed or sufficiently mitigated.