

A14
**Cambridge to Huntingdon
improvement scheme**
Development Consent Order Application

HE/A14/EX/210

TR010018

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Response to Huntingdonshire District Council's
Deadline 11 submission on car parking at Huntingdon rail station

October 2015

The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010



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1. Background

- 1.1 Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) submitted a representation at examination deadline 11¹ relating to Highways England's Huntingdon Station Car Park Report submitted at deadline 10 (HE/A14/EX/170²).
- 1.2 Highways England accepts that the loss of station car parking is a matter of importance to HDC and has therefore provided a response to points raised to help clarify matters.
- 1.3 Issues raised by HDC are addressed in Section 3 below in the order that they appear in the HDC representation.

2. Ongoing engagement

- 2.1 Highways England is engaging with HDC, Network Rail (NR) and Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) on the matter of Huntingdon station car park.
- 2.2 As noted in the deadline 10 Statement of Common Ground Report (HE/A14/EX/165³), Highways England and Network Rail intend to enter into an agreement in relation to the interfaces between NR and Highways England across the scheme. As part of that, the agreement will make provision in relation to the potential for car parking at Huntingdon station. However, replacement car parking is not proposed as part of the A14 scheme and is not authorised in the DCO. Rather, it is recognised that NR, in accordance with its duties under statute and under the Network Code / station access conditions and in conjunction with GTR may determine that the provision of replacement car parking is necessary. The proposed agreement would provide that in such case, the cost of the provision of replacement car parking would be covered by Highways England as a compensation item. Any proposals brought forward by NR may require listed building consent and planning permission in the normal course, but in this way, it is thought likely that replacement car parking will be brought forward if deemed necessary for railway purposes.
- 2.3 The SoCG with NR sets out this agreed approach.

¹ <http://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/projects/TR010018/Events/Deadline%2011/Huntingdonshire%20District%20Council.pdf>

² <http://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/projects/TR010018/Events/Deadline%2010%20Highways%20England%20-%20HE-A14-EX-170%20Huntingdon%20Station%20Car%20Park%20Report.pdf>

³ <http://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/projects/TR010018/Events/Deadline%2010%20Highways%20England%20-%20HE-A14-EX-165%20Statement%20of%20Common%20Ground%20Report.pdf>

3. Response to HDC's submission

- 3.1 In point 1 of HDC's representation, it is stated that the Huntingdon Station Car Park Report fails to recognise that the land at the Elevations car park is allocated for employment and the site of an existing planning consent for a water tower office conversion under the terms of the approved Huntingdon West Area Action Plan (HWAAP).
- 3.2 Point 2 goes on to describe that the Huntingdon Station Car Park Report is fundamentally flawed in noting capacity at Elevations, rather than 'highlighting the likely loss of the entire availability of this car park' and the greater loss of rail commuter car parking.
- 3.3 In response to points 1 and 2, the Huntingdon Station Car Park Report acknowledges the uncertainty around capacity at Elevations. Paragraph 4.3.5 of this report states 'the Elevations parking is only temporarily permitted by the council and that the owner potentially wishes to develop the site which could affect future operation of this facility'. Whilst the Elevations car park is allocated by HDC for employment use in the Huntingdon West Area Action Plan, there is currently no planning application that would result in the loss of the Elevations car park.
- 3.4 Highways England agrees that should car parking at the Elevations site no longer be available due to future redevelopment, there would be increased demand for space at the railway station car park. This could happen irrespective of whether or not the A14 scheme proceeds, but is more likely to happen once the viaduct is removed as part of the A14 construction works.
- 3.5 Highways England considers that the assessment of the effect of loss of station car parking spaces takes into account the uncertainty of future provision at Elevations. The findings would remain the same, regardless of future parking availability at Elevations. The Huntingdon Station Car Park Report considers that this loss of parking would not result in likely significant effects in environmental impact assessment (EIA) terms.
- 3.6 In point 3, HDC questions the suitability of Huntingdon Town Centre car parks to provide a realistic alternative to station car parking.
- 3.7 In response to point 3, Highways England accepts HDC's view that there is limited alternative 'full day' capacity within reasonable walking distance of the railway station.
- 3.8 In point 4, HDC states that Highways England is 'not addressing the fundamental issue of ensuring that the rail station and its needs to ensure future sustainability are being properly considered' in relation to the loss of parking at the station.

- 3.9 In response to point 4, the position is a set out at paragraph 2.2 above. As explained in the Huntingdon Station Car Park Report and as noted above, the loss of parking would not result in likely significant environmental effects. In any event, during detailed design possibilities will be explored to lessen any effects (for example, through phasing of construction works) and discussions with Network Rail and Govia Thameslink Railway indicate that there is potential for reconfiguration of parking spaces.
- 3.10 Should NR and the station operator determine that further car parking is necessary for the viability of the station, then the approach described in paragraph 2.2 above provides for the flexibility for them to do that.
- 3.11 In point 5, HDC questions the proposed road layout on Brampton Road.
- 3.12 In response to point 5, Highways England has provided a response on this matter to Landro at deadline 11 in document HE/A14/EX/172⁴ section 2.19 response paragraphs 3 and 5. In summary, the proposed scheme does make some improvement to the west station car park access, adding a right turning lane on Brampton Road in acknowledgement of its anticipated increased usage. However Highways England recognise that the narrowness of the access road, its steep gradient and uncontrolled junction with Brampton Road does result in problems, especially in the evening peak hour. The provision of additional spaces in this west car park would add to the problem and it would need addressing should Network Rail come forward with detailed proposals.
- 3.13 In conclusion, Highways England accepts that the loss of station car parking is a matter of importance to HDC. It is hoped that this representation provides clarity and assurance to HDC that a solution can be found which benefits stakeholders and users of the station car park.

⁴ <http://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/projects/TR010018/Events/Deadline%2011/HE-A14-EX-172%20.pdf>