

**A14 THRAPSTON TO BRAMPTON – GRADE SEPARATED JUNCTIONS
(Report by Director of Operational Services)**

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To consider the current position of the Highway Agency regarding the junction improvements on the A14 from Thrapston to Brampton.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 In September 1998, the Highways Agency announced the preferred scheme for the Thrapston to Brampton Grade Separation of Junctions. In 2000, the Highways Agency discussed with the County Council and the District Council the programme for the implementation of the scheme including proposed Orders, public exhibitions and the timing for the commencement of works which were planned for 2001. During 2001 work continued by the Highways Agency on the grade separation orders and on 27 February 2002 the Highways Agency published the Draft Orders for consultation. This was to end on 3 May 2002. A letter received on 12 March 2002 confirmed that subject to no objections to the Draft Orders the grade separated scheme would begin construction in 2003/04.
- 2.2 There was no further correspondence with the Highways Agency with the District Council. A letter dated 21 July 2003 to the Chairman of Cambridgeshire County Council (but not copied to the District Council) was the first indication that the scheme had been put on hold. The reason given is that new government evaluation criteria has resulted in a reduction in its priority.
- 2.3 A letter has never been received by the District Council on this matter, but Jonathan Djanogly MP has copied the District Council into a letter received from the Highways Agency explaining why the scheme has been put on hold. This is attached as Annex A.

3. DISCUSSION

- 3.1 The Highways Agency has concluded in looking at the scheme against the new government criteria (which relate to the Government's five objectives for transport, environment, safety, economy, accessibility and integration) that because of the relatively low number of accidents at the A14 sites, this scheme 'struggles to compete with others where there is a higher accident record and/or a lower cost solution in prospect'. As a consequence of this, the Highways Agency believe that the £25.4million price tag for the 4 grade separated full connection junctions and over-bridges at another 3 is difficult to justify. The Agency is currently investigating what other sources of funding may be used to progress the A14

improvements and/or whether there are any less costly alternatives which could be justified in the intervening period. This could be linked to the evaluation work indicated in the London-South Midlands Multi-Modal Study.

- 3.2 It is very disappointing to note that at this late stage of the process, when local expectations have been raised, that the Highways Agency should now reconsider their position on the scheme. Members will know that a petition was presented to Full Council on 24 September from local people asking the District Council to do everything it could to persuade the Highways Agency to implement the scheme. A letter has also been received from Easton Parish Council asking for support.
- 3.3 The District Council can lobby both the Highways Agency and the Government to seek to have the scheme reinstated. The County and District in Cambridgeshire have agreed, through the Transportation Lead Members Meeting, to express concerns in a co-ordinated approach and to seek discussions with the Highway Agency. A letter has now been sent by the County Council on our behalf and this is attached as Annex B.

4. RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 That Cabinet authorise the Director of Operational Services in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning Strategy to lobby the Highways Agency, Go-East and the Department for Transport, in co-ordination with other relevant local authorities, to reinstate the scheme.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- ❖ Highway Agency Letter to Jonathan Djanogly dated 16 September 2003
- ❖ Letter from Highway Agency to District Council dated 26 February 2002
- ❖ Draft Orders for the A14 Thrapston to Brampton Improvements

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