

ANNEX B

**Ms Cara Elder
A14 Scheme Administrator
Highways Agency
Heron House
49-53 Goldington Road
BEDFORD
MK40 3LL**

Our Ref: EW/LR/A14
Your Ref:

4th July 2005

Dear Ms Elder

A14 ELLINGTON TO FEN DITTON – CONSULTATION RESPONSE

At the Full Council on 28 June 2005, Huntingdonshire District Council considered the consultation proposals for the A14. The following resolutions were passed:

- (a) That the Council approve the Joint Statement of Support of the Cambridgeshire Local Authorities, Cambridgeshire Constabulary, Cambridgeshire Horizons and EEDA. I understand this statement will be submitted to you shortly by Cambridgeshire County Council.
- (b) That the Director of Operational Services be authorised, after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy, to make representations to the Highways Agency with regard to the need for measures to ameliorate noise during and after construction and to mitigate visual intrusion on all the communities affected by the routing of the proposed A14 upgrade scheme between Ellington and Fen Drayton; and
- (c) That, subject to (b) above, the comments listed below form the basis of the Council's formal response to the Highways Agency consultation on the upgrade of the A14.
- (1) The implications of the choice for the preferred route will have profound and significant economic effects for both the town of Huntingdon and the whole of the area. It is important that the choice made is not based solely on highway network implications, nor just on the environmental effects. It is important that the economic considerations are also taken into account.

(2) The need to ensure that appropriate noise and visual intrusion mitigation measures are implemented as part of the new road proposals. These should also be introduced at the start of the building process (see (b) above). Notwithstanding the generality of the forgoing every effort, in consultation with the Environment Agency and other interested parties, should be made to reduce the excessive height of the viaduct over the River Great Ouse, see (11) below.

- (3) The alignment of the A1 from Alconbury to south of Buckden could be realigned westward to alleviate the environmental effects of the upgrade of the A1 on Buckden and Brampton, but that the potential impact on Brampton Wood SSSI needs to be part of the consideration. We believe that there could be meaningful further discussions between this Authority, the County council and the Highways Agency.
- (4) The current proposals show the alignment of the new A14 from south of Buckden Tip turning northwards and running alongside the western edge of the A1 to join the A14 to the west of Brampton Hut and the widening of the A1 from Brampton Hut to south of Brampton. This will mean that in this area there will be 10 lanes of highway. The Highway Agency are asked to consider whether there are alternative methods of dealing with the Brampton Hut Interchange which would enable an all-ways junction to be implemented in that location, thus relieving the need for additional widening of the A1 between Brampton Hut and south of Brampton. This could form part of the discussions requested in paragraph (3) above.
- (5) The interchange between the new A14, the A1 and Brampton Hut interchange needs careful consideration and should be fully integrated if at all possible.
- (6) A new access to Alconbury Airfield site should be provided directly onto the de-trunked A14.
- (7) The existing junctions on the current A14 at the Hemingfords need to be considered in terms of safety works.
- (8) The absence of a junction between the new A14 and the A1198 at Godmanchester is supported. If a proposal for a junction were to come forward this should be vigorously opposed.
- (9) The issue of the closure of the A1 slip road northbound, north of Buckden into Brampton, appears to have been resolved by the Highway Agency producing an alternative as set out earlier in this report. This would certainly alleviate the concern of how lorries would access Buckden Tip. It is essential that any proposals do not encourage through traffic either through Brampton or Buckden.
- (10) The proposals envisage the new A14 coming back on alignment at Fen Drayton with an interchange to accommodate the junction with the old A14 and then a junction shortly after for the Trinity Foot/Cambridge Services area. However, access to the services is not direct from the proposed A14 and HCVs would have to use the local road between Girton and Fen Drayton. It is suggested that the location of the Fen Drayton Interchange should be further investigated so it could be moved to the Trinity Foot junction thus providing good access to the service areas.

- (11) The proposal for the new A14 includes a viaduct spanning the River Great Ouse and from the information available the height of the viaduct seems excessive. It may be a requirement of the Environment Agency, but the Highway Agency should be asked to ensure that the height of the new viaduct is only that which is absolutely necessary.
- (12) Whilst the proposals for the Girton Interchange are outside the boundary of the Huntingdonshire area, the current proposal does not include for an all-ways junction between the A14, M11 and A428. This could have implications for the traffic movements associated with the A428 and the Highway Agency should be asked to investigate whether an all-ways junction is possible.

In considering the two options put forward in the consultation for the trunk road network between the A1 and Fen Drayton, the following points need to be considered (the de-trunking option will be referred to as the CHUMMS Option and the continuing use of the existing A14 as a trunk road will be referred to as the Alternative Option):

- (a) Whilst one of the alleged advantages of the Alternative Option is that it is cheaper than the CHUMMS Option by some £30m, the real issue is which option delivers the best long-term highway solution, the most beneficial economic effects in terms of the vitality and long-term viability of Huntingdon, and the capability for development to be accommodated without detriment to the environment. Therefore, the Alternative Option should not be chosen purely on the cost basis
- (b) In any case, whilst the initial capital estimates indicate that the Alternative Option may be cheaper than the CHUMMS Option, in overall terms the difference in cost is only some £30m and at this stage of the process the ability for contractors to improve on these prices mean that the difference is minimal.
- (c) Huntingdonshire is part of the M11 Growth Area Corridor which the Government has established to deliver significant levels of growth in the coming decades. Huntingdon will play a significant role, not only in the delivery of new housing, but also for a range of new services and facilities, particularly new retail and commercial development, to serve the needs of the growing population of Huntingdonshire. There are 4 major development sites within the town centre of Huntingdon and a major housing development at Ermine Street. These developments require a significant level of investment in order for Huntingdon to remain a vibrant market town that is able to cope with additional traffic and improve its environmental quality. Work towards the implementation of these sites has been predicated on the assumptions drawn from the CHUMMS Strategy that there would be a new A14 and that the current A14 around Huntingdon and Godmanchester would be de-trunked to become a local road to encourage public transport provision, the development of an integrated public transport interchange and the diversion of existing rat-running traffic in Huntingdon, Godmanchester and St. Ives onto the de-trunked route. We have provided the Highways Agency with the appropriate development briefs already but further copies are attached to this letter.

- (d) If the Alternative Option is implemented the community of Brampton would be surrounded on 3 sides by major trunk roads, and the communities of Huntingdon and Godmanchester would continue to suffer major noise and visual intrusion as well as pollution. This would particularly apply in later years as the created capacity would reduce due to predicted traffic growth and the impact of new development, including at Alconbury Airfield, taking effect.
- (e) The line of the new A14 is proposed to be further south from Brampton than was possibly inferred by the CHUMMS line. This does mean that the communities of Buckden and The Offords could experience more visual and noise intrusion than had originally been expected. However, in terms of the two Options, the difference between a dual 2 and a dual 3 road is marginal. The issue therefore for these communities is whether the line of the road is optimal rather than the number of lanes.
- (f) The CHUMMS Option does require that the existing A14 is de-trunked and the viaduct taken down to an at grade junction by the station. In principle, this concept should be supported as it could provide a long-term opportunity for the reorganisation of local traffic movements around and through Huntingdon. This could not be achieved if the alternative option is pursued. However, at the present time there is insufficient information available to enable a firm conclusion to be drawn about whether an at-grade junction at Brampton Road would help to ease the traffic movements or whether it would cause further problems. It is essential that detailed modelling work of this proposed junction is carried out as soon as possible to enable the Council to decide whether this junction has appropriate capacity. Some work is going on at present. However, more detailed modelling is required. This modelling needs to show how the de-trunking of the A14 and the changes at Spittals will affect the through traffic which currently uses the ring road on an east-west movement.

Since the original CHUMMS Study, transport related air quality issues have been identified in Huntingdon that will result in the declaration of an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) for nitrogen dioxide (NO²) later this year. Having regard to this the CHUMMS Option is much preferred in terms of the expected improvement to air quality within the future AQMA in Huntingdon

Yours sincerely

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