

ANNEX B

DRAFT HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL RESPONSE TO THE HIGHWAYS AGENCY APRIL 2014 PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Reason for Response

The Highways Agency is undertaking a Statutory Consultation relating to its proposals for the A14 and this requires a formal response from the District Council. It is suggested that the matters covered below should form the basis of that response.

Overall Consideration

1. Huntingdonshire District Council continues to support the proposed scheme and its early delivery as the project remains vital to relieve current congestion, reduce journey times and address the safety issues of the current route as well as the delivery of the sustainable growth agenda across Huntingdonshire and the wider Greater Cambridge area, and also creating a positive legacy as part of eventual delivery.
2. Support for the scheme and the agreed financial contribution remains dependant on the removal of the existing A14 Viaduct within Huntingdon and its replacement with a new local road network for the town
3. That the Highways Agency continues to maintain the overall aim of commencing construction work on site by the end of 2016

Principal Elements of the Scheme

4. The Council welcomes and supports the planned improvement and widening of the A1 between Alconbury and Brampton, reflecting the previous request of this Council for that to be included within the proposed scheme based on predicted traffic growth on that route.
5. The Council welcomes and supports the planned alternative layout of the A14 and A1 to the west of Brampton whereby the A1, as the projected busier traffic route, is moved further west. This support is conditional on the overall design of this element of the scheme providing adequate noise and landscaping mitigation between the planned Trunk Roads and Brampton village, including as part of any bridge or elevated structure provided.
6. In relation to non-motorised user (NMU) access within the Brampton area, while detailed stakeholder discussions continue and are welcomed by the Council, it is requested that as part of the overall design in (4) above, that appropriate linkage is made across the proposed A14 and A1 alignments in order to create and maintain east/west non-motorised access to both Brampton Wood and Brampton Hut services. In the longer term as part of future legacy, it is also requested that the future of planned Borrow Pits in this area are also linked to these requirements.

7. In addition to (2) above, the Council supports the Viaduct removal and the planned creation of a new local road network within Huntingdon. Concern remains however in relation to the physical impact of these proposals at both Mill Common and Views Common and the need to provide and maintain access to the key transport node at Huntingdon Rail Station. The Council welcomes continued Stakeholder dialogue relating to the overall design in these areas and indeed, to emerging alternative design proposals that minimise that impact further, particularly at Mill Common. Such alternative proposals are also welcomed in order to minimise the impact on significant heritage issues at Mill Common and in the vicinity of Hinchingsbrooke House.
8. In relation to (7) above, the Council requests that continuing design and stakeholder dialogue also considers the merit of providing an additional road-based link from Parkway to a de-trunked A14 across Views Common to further minimise traffic impact at the Hinchingsbrooke Park Road junction and the potential for a separate cycle/foot bridge to the north side of the Brampton Road railway bridge following the removal of the A14 Viaduct.
9. The alignment of the new Huntingdon Southern bypass is supported, including the proposed partial junction with the A1198. In terms of detail, this support is conditional on the overall design of this section of the scheme providing adequate noise, landscaping, air quality, land contamination, and drainage mitigation, as well as NMU accessibility, between the planned route and villages on that corridor including The Offords, Hilton and Fenstanton (south of the current A14 alignment). Such design needs to pay particular attention to the impacts of new bridge crossings of both the River Great Ouse and the East Coast Main Line (ECML).
10. The Council welcomes continued dialogue with the HA and partners relating to overall design and would stipulate that the need for final traffic forecasts for the project to be completed in order to inform final assessment and design.
11. The Council notes the proposed use of Borrow Pits as a source of construction material for the proposed scheme and welcomes continued dialogue on the future use of these, post-scheme construction. This formed part of the Council's 'Scoping Opinion' response to the Planning Inspectorate on the Draft Environmental Impact Assessment where the Council stated that particular weight and regard on the future use of these features post-project completion was necessary as part of the overall legacy of the scheme, including their visual impact, future roles, scope for innovative treatments and biodiversity improvements and maintenance of these across the local community. It is of vital that the long-term future of these is identified and tied into the wider delivery of Green Infrastructure & Biodiversity needs within this part of the County and that the required level of funding is secured at the earliest opportunity to ensure that the future viability of such a significant legacy is secured.

12. In addition to (7) above and as part of our Scoping Opinion response, we welcome the extensive work that has been undertaken to identify Heritage and Conservation issues and the ranking of these in terms of importance relating to their designated status. We also welcome the same form of ranking within the Landscape character assessment and the identification of all trees with TPO status and on all these issues, we support continued dialogue and joint working with the Highways Agency/J2A in seeking an overall scheme that protects or enhances these areas of issue or to reach agreement on a range of interventions to mitigate any impact as far as possible.

13. Additionally in relation to Heritage & Conservation issues, and also as outlined in our Scoping Opinion, while we welcome the identification of assets within Huntingdon following the de-trunking of the A14 and Viaduct removal, it cannot be over-emphasised highly enough, that due weight must be given to the impacts of the scheme in this location. This is a highly significant area relating to the wider arena of Huntingdon's historic environment and any final scheme must maximise opportunities to minimise impact and indeed to enhance these following de-trunking in order to create an appropriate legacy. This is of particular relevance at Post Street in Godmanchester and across the Medieval Town Bridge at the River Great Ouse that connects Godmanchester to Huntingdon. We welcome the continued opportunity to explore future environmental opportunities in all these areas following de-trunking and reduced traffic flows on these routes and consider that the highest possible regard is given to these elements in moving forward.