

**HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**Title/Subject Matter:** A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon Improvement Scheme

**Meeting/Date:** Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) – 9<sup>th</sup> June 2015  
Cabinet – 18<sup>th</sup> June 2015

**Executive Portfolio:** Planning & Housing Strategy

**Report by:** Head of Development

**Ward(s) affected:** All Wards

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**Executive Summary:**

Members will be aware of continuing progress reports in the development of the A14 scheme, including that in June 2014 outlining the outcomes and recommendations of Highways England's (HE) formal public consultation. This was followed by a further progress report to Members in March 2015 outlining progress with the development and delivery of the scheme, including the proposed timeline to overall delivery and details of the proposed Examination in Public.

The purpose of this report is to provide a further progress report leading into the A14 Examination in Public.

The Development Consent Order (DCO) was submitted by HE to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2014. The application was accepted for Examination by PINS on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2015 and the Preliminary Meeting prior to the formal start of the Examination period was held on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2015.

The formal Examination in Public commenced on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2015.

This report includes an update on the Council's progress in negotiations with HE since the last report considered during March 2015 in our role as a Tier 1 Stakeholder and a statutory consultee in relation to the overall project.

The report also considers 3 key elements that the Council will submit to PINS as part of the Examination process, namely the (Draft) Joint Local Impact Report (Joint LIR), a (Draft) Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) and the Council's Written Representation. It is important to note that both the (Draft) Joint LIR and the (Draft) SoCG will remain continually evolving documents between now and during the Examination process as matters are negotiated as far as possible towards final agreement during the coming weeks. Updated versions will be submitted to Members where possible during this period.

**Recommendation(s):**

Members are recommended to approve;

- i) The (Draft) Joint Local Impact Report of the Council, together with other Tier 1 stakeholders, namely Cambridgeshire County Council, Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council,
- ii) The (Draft) Statement of Common Ground between the Council and Highways England,
- iii) The Written Representation of the Council to be submitted to the A14 Examination in Public,
- iv) That, in the interests of expediency, delegated authority be given to the Managing Director and the Executive Councillor for Planning & Housing Strategy relating to the agreement of any required minor amendments to the (Draft) Joint Local Impact Report, the (Draft) Statement of Common Ground and the Written Representation and other such documents as necessary.

## **1. WHAT IS THIS REPORT ABOUT/PURPOSE?**

- 1.1 This report gives a further update on progress with the development of the A14 Project since the last A14 report was considered during March 2015, matters surrounding the commencement and running of the Examination in Public and the relevant documentation that the Council will submit to the Examination.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Since the original publication of the Cambridge to Huntingdon Multi-Modal Study (CHUMMS) in 2001, the Council has consistently supported calls for the improvement of the A14 between Cambridge and Huntingdon, including the provision of a new off-line route to the south of Huntingdon & Godmanchester and the removal of the current A14 Viaduct within Huntingdon, the downgrading of the existing A14 route and the creation of a new local road network within Huntingdon.
- 2.2 The Council is also a funding partner towards the proposed scheme with an agreed financial package in place to deliver an overall contribution of £5 million towards the project.
- 2.3 A plan of the overall scheme will be available at the meeting.

## **3. CURRENT POSITION & EXAMINATION IN PUBLIC**

- 3.1 Prior to the start of the formal examination process, the Council submitted a Relevant Representation to PINS following your consideration of this at the last meeting. This paper outlined the key issues that the Council wished to make representations on during the Examination. The final approved version is attached at Appendix A.
- 3.2 Since the last report, Officers have been continuing to negotiate on outstanding matters and while progress has been made on many, others remain outstanding and yet to be resolved. The current Draft Written Representation of the Council is attached at Appendix B. This document outlines the 'Case for the Council' including more extensive background on the Council's input to the scheme since the CHUMMS study in 2001. Particular attention should be paid to Section 8, which outlines matters outstanding to be agreed and on which Officers continue to make progress or to outline matters that it is considered need to be examined.
- 3.3 A Preliminary Meeting was held on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2015 when the three appointed PINS Examiners outlined the Examination process to those who had made a Relevant Representation. The Examination Timetable issued on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2015 following the Preliminary Meeting, is attached at Appendix C and particular attention is drawn to the submission deadline of 15<sup>th</sup> June 2015 for Written Representations and the Joint Local Impact Report and 26<sup>th</sup> June 2015 for Statements of Common Ground.
- 3.4 At this meeting, an Officer of the Council, together with colleagues from the County Council and Cambridge City Council, outlined the democratic processes of each authority relating to the approval of required documentation and a requested revised submission deadline for these key documents of 30<sup>th</sup> June 2015, particularly in relation to this Council's approval and our agreement to the Joint Local Impact Report.

- 3.5 While the Examiners noted and understood this timeline for final submission, they considered that as each Authority would have its relevant reports published in the public arena by 15<sup>th</sup> June 2015, that all Council's should submit their documentation by this deadline under the caveat where needed of 'Draft – Subject to Formal Democratic approval of (Name) Council'.
- 3.6 The submission of a Local Impact Report is a statutory requirement of the DCO process under the terms of the Planning Act 2008 and given the commonality of issues across the local authority areas covered by the proposed Scheme, it has been agreed that a joint version will be submitted by this Council, the County Council, Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council. The current Draft version is attached at Appendix D.
- 3.7 The final key document to be submitted to the examination is the Statement of Common Ground between Highways England (HE) and the Council, which is a further statutory requirement of the process. The current draft can be found at Appendix E.
- 3.8 In the case of these three submissions, it should be noted that all are in draft form and are still subject to updating and final agreement and further copies will be made available at the meeting if necessary. The examination process allows updated documents to be submitted during the time in which the Examiners are sitting but final versions must be agreed and submitted by the end of the examination on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2015.
- 3.9 In order to prevent undue delay in the consideration of minor updating to these documents, it is recommended that delegated authority be given to the Managing Director and the Executive Councillor for Planning & Housing Strategy for this purpose. While any matters or changes of a fundamental or strategic nature are not expected, if these were to arise, these would continue be reported to the Panel and the Cabinet in the usual way.

#### **4. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL**

- 4.1 The Environmental Well-Being Panel have been informed that there are no planned 'Borrow Pit' additions following questions on potential changes. It was confirmed that no changes were imminent and any discrepancies that did occur would be resolved before the end of the examination period. Members noted that there was a Legacy meeting scheduled on 11th June 2015 to further discuss Borrow Pits, making sure that maintenance was upheld after the obligatory 10 years.

The Panel queried the routes for the aggregate deliveries during the A14 development and access issues that might arise from the work. It was explained that HE have indicated that the route of the new roads would bear the majority of the construction traffic, including a new 'Haul Route' between Ellington and Swavesey. Contractors appointed to carry out the works might suggest an alternative solution although the District Council would continue to press for the 'Haul Route' as currently proposed. The Panel suggested that this information should be provided to local Parish Councils to avoid further confusion.

It was explained that Borrow Pits were utilised in a variety of ways such as landfill sites and the current option was to fill them with water, creating uses within that environment. It was noted that after the Compulsory Purchase of the land it then had to be offered back to the original landowner. If that offer

was declined then HE have a statutory 10 year obligation and the Council was working to have a greater say on how the sites were used in the long-term future beyond that 10 year period.

In conclusion, the Panel accepted the report and remarked on the usefulness of the document as an update. All recommendations to Cabinet were approved by the Panel.

## **5. KEY IMPACTS/RISKS? HOW WILL THEY BE ADDRESSED?**

5.1 The key issues remain the continuing discussions between the Tier 1 stakeholders and Highways England relating to matters contained within Appendix B. While the outstanding issues are broad in nature, it is anticipated that many will be resolved or subject to Examination during the formal process before the close in November 2015.

5.2 While all matters are of importance to the Council and the local community, the completion of the assessment of traffic impacts on the local road network is a key issue, together with any noise and air quality issues that may arise or are still outstanding, particularly relating to affected properties.

## **6. WHAT ACTIONS WILL BE TAKEN/TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

6.1 The Examination timetable is shown at Appendix C. The formal outcomes of the Examination are expected to be known during the first-half of 2016 and, if the Scheme is approved, it is still our understanding from Highways England that the scheme would commence construction works before the end of 2016.

## **7. LINK TO THE CORPORATE PLAN**

7.1 The fundamental objective of this Council's engagement in the scheme has been to ensure that the project fully aligns with the key priorities of the Corporate Plan, namely;

- A strong local economy
- Sustainable growth
- Thriving communities

## **8. CONSULTATION**

8.1 As reported previously, public consultation is a key requirement of the DCO process and the Council confirmed our approval to the 'Adequacy of Consultation' to PINS on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2015.

## **9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 The Council's primary legal responsibility remains our approval to provide agreed contributory funding of £5 million towards the project as outlined in the previous report.

## **10. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 As outlined in Section 9 above, this was reported in the previous report on this subject.

## **11. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 None.

## **12 REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS**

12.1 The Council has consistently supported the need for the improvement of the A14 since our consideration of the CHUMMS recommendations in 2001. It has also resolved in the past that an upgraded A14 is vital to the continued economic prosperity of Huntingdonshire, as well as Cambridgeshire, as well as being of regional and national importance given its links to the East Coast ports and the international markets of Europe.

12.2 On this basis, the Scheme as now proposed continues to include the overall improvements that have been consistently sought, including the removal of the A14 Viaduct within Huntingdon. It is therefore recommended that the Council engages with the Examination process outlined in this report and submits our Written Representation, Joint Local Impact Report and Statement of Common ground to PINS.

12.3 It is also recommended that the Council continues to negotiate on the Outstanding Issues contained within the Written Representation and seeks to reach agreement on as many of these as possible and that any outstanding are duly considered through the Examination process.

## **13. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED**

- Appendix A – Relevant Representation
- Appendix B - Draft Written Representation
- Appendix B/1 – A14 Noise Adversely Affected Properties
- Appendix C – Examination Timetable
- Appendix D – Draft Joint Local Impact report
- Appendix E - Draft Statement of Common Ground

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

A14 Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being & Cabinet Reports – June 2014 and March 2015:

- A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon – Response to Highways Agency Development Consent Order Pre-Application Statutory Consultation Report (Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) 17<sup>th</sup> June 2014 and Cabinet 19<sup>th</sup> June 2014)

<http://applications.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/moderngov/documents/s67005/A14%20Cabinet%20Report%20Final%20Pack.pdf>

<http://applications.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/moderngov/documents/s67000/A14%20Cabinet%20Report%20-%20June%202014%20Final%20Version.pdf>

- A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon Improvement Scheme Report (Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) 10<sup>th</sup> March 2015 and Cabinet 19<sup>th</sup> March 2015)

<http://applications.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/moderngov/documents/s69848/Item%206%20-%20A14%20Report%20OS%20Environmental%20Well-Being%20150310.pdf>

<http://applications.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/moderngov/documents/s69983/A14%20Report%20Cabinet%20150319.pdf>

Cambridge to Huntingdon Multi-Modal Study (CHUMMS) – Final Report August 2001  
<http://www.highways.gov.uk/roads/road-projects/a14-cambridge-to-huntingdon-improvement-scheme/>

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