

A14 Ellington to Fen Ditton

Public Consultation

30th March to 30th June 2005



Introduction

The Highways Agency plans to improve the A14 between Ellington, to the west of Huntingdon, and Fen Ditton, to the north-east of Cambridge. This consultation document summarises the need for the improvement and outlines the proposals on which we would like your views.

There will be a series of exhibitions at which representatives from the Highways Agency and its consulting engineers, Atkins, will be available to answer your questions. Details of the venues and dates are given on the back of this leaflet.

The Need for the Scheme

The A14 trunk road serves several important purposes in this area:

- It is a strategic route of national importance which connects the motorways of the Midlands and the North of England to the City of Cambridge, East Anglia, the ports of Felixstowe and Harwich, and the M11 to the south;
- It is the most important route for local traffic linking Huntingdon and Cambridge with St Ives and other towns and villages in the area;
- The A14 Cambridge Northern Bypass provides access for local traffic to the "northern fringe" areas of Cambridge, including the Cambridge Science Park.

Many sections of the A14 are currently operating close to capacity, with an average of 65,000 to 85,000 vehicles per day using the route. Up to 25% of the traffic is heavy goods vehicles, which is about twice the national average for this type of road. Consequently, the A14 experiences severe congestion, particularly during peak hours, which results in unreliable journey times.

The Highways Agency recognises that reducing the number of accidents on the A14 is an important objective. Whilst there have been serious accidents on the A14 in recent years, the majority of accidents are minor in nature, reflecting the congested traffic conditions, but can quickly cause severe disruption over a wide area.

Cambridgeshire has been identified as a high growth area, with a view to providing both new housing and employment. Improvements to the trunk road network, as well as to public transport, will be required to sustain this level of growth.



Scheme Objectives

In 2001, the Cambridge to Huntingdon Multi Modal Study (CHUMMS) recommended a strategy of trunk road and local highway improvements combined with the provision of a high-quality public transport system.

The objectives of the A14 Ellington to Fen Ditton scheme are to:

- Deliver the trunk road improvements recommended by CHUMMS;
- Improve journey time reliability and safety on the A14 by reducing congestion and traffic conflicts;
- Ensure no significant worsening of the CHUMMS scheme assessment results and, where possible, improve on them.

The Proposed Scheme

The proposed scheme to improve the A14 comprises:

- A new dual carriageway to the south of Huntingdon between Ellington and Fen Drayton;
- Widening of the existing A14 to three lanes in each direction between Fen Drayton and Fen Ditton;
- Local access roads alongside the widened A14 to separate local and strategic traffic;
- Major interchanges with the A1 at Brampton, the existing A14 at Fen Drayton and the M11/A428 at Girton.

CHUMMS recommended that the A14 between Godmanchester and Spittals junctions be modified to enable buses to use the existing road corridor to access Huntingdon station and town centre. To achieve this as part of the A14 scheme, the Huntingdon Railway Viaduct, which has a residual life of less than 10 years, would be removed and a new junction with Brampton Road provided in its place. This proposal is referred to as the **CHUMMS Strategy**.

Alternatively, the Huntingdon Railway Viaduct could be reconstructed and the existing A14 kept open to traffic as it is now. Traffic to and from the North would use the existing A14 between Fen Drayton and the A1 at Alconbury. Traffic to and from the West would use the new A14 route to the south of Brampton and Godmanchester. This option is offered as the **Alternative Proposal**.

The proposed scheme is described overleaf with details of the CHUMMS Strategy and the Alternative Proposal. All details shown at this stage are indicative and may be revised during the detailed design process.

Travel Conditions

Without the proposed improvements, future traffic growth, including that associated with planned developments, would have severe implications on the existing A14 trunk road. Total peak-hour travel times averaged across all journeys in the area are expected to increase by 75% by 2025 with increased queuing and delays. Average speeds are expected to reduce by 30% to 27 mph compared to around 38mph at present.

If the A14 is not improved, journey times in the morning peak period between Ellington and Fen Ditton are expected to increase by 50% by 2025. Worsening congestion on the A14 would encourage some traffic to continue to use other minor routes in preference to the A14.

The proposed scheme would provide more highway capacity along the A14 corridor which would significantly improve travel conditions and reduce traffic congestion on the A14 and other roads in the area. This would lead to reduced journey times and improved journey time reliability. Journey times in the morning peak along the A14 between Ellington and Fen Ditton are predicted to reduce by up to 25% with the scheme in 2025, which equates to a saving of around 10 minutes off the present journey time.

Safety

Accidents are regarded as an issue on the A14 due to the high traffic flows and number of heavy goods vehicles. 852 personal injury accidents were reported in the 5-year period up to December 2004, of which 86% resulted in slight injuries, 12% were serious and 2% fatal. Whilst this is not significantly different to other similar trunk roads, incidents on the A14 (accidents or breakdowns) can quickly cause severe disruption to traffic as there are few suitable diversion routes available.

The proposed scheme would deliver substantial improvements in safety by reducing congestion and vehicle conflicts, as through traffic on the new and widened A14, including the majority of heavy good vehicles, would be separated from local traffic.

In the Alternative Proposal, the existing A14 would provide a diversion route in the event of an accident leading to closure of the new A14, and vice versa. Additional emergency access onto the new two-lane A14 would be considered.



Environmental Considerations

At the western end of the scheme, the new A14 would closely follow the existing A14 and A1 corridors in order to minimise visual impact on the landscape and any impact on Brampton Wood, a Site of Special Scientific Interest. In the River Great Ouse Valley, it would cross Buckden Gravel Pits, a County Wildlife Site, but there would be no direct impact on the Brampton Flood Meadow SSSI.

The proposed route across open countryside between the A1 and the Fen Drayton Interchange and the widened A14 between Fen Drayton and Fen Ditton would result in adverse impacts on the environment, particularly increased noise and visual intrusion. Earth mounds, planting and environmental barriers would be provided where appropriate to help lessen these impacts. All new roads would be constructed with low noise surfacing throughout.

There are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments along the route of the scheme. However there are several sites in the area which are potentially of archaeological interest; these will be investigated before final design and construction.

In the CHUMMS Strategy, the new A14 to the south of Huntingdon would remove around 50% of the traffic that currently uses the existing A14 between Ellington and Fen Drayton. This would reduce traffic noise, reduce visual intrusion and improve air quality to properties along this section of the existing road. Whilst the scheme would bring particular benefits to Huntingdon, Godmanchester and Fenstanton, there would be increased impacts affecting properties and villages near the route of the new A14.

The Alternative Proposal would also provide environmental benefits to the existing A14 corridor compared to the current situation, although in parts noise could be similar to current levels. The impact of the new road south of Huntingdon would be less than with the CHUMMS Strategy as it would take less land and carry around 65% of the traffic. However all A14 traffic would initially be diverted onto the new road during the reconstruction of Huntingdon Railway Viaduct.

Exhibition Details

The exhibitions will provide further illustrative details of the proposed scheme, including indicative landscaping and other environmental proposals. An interactive computer simulation of the scheme will also be available.

Exhibition Venue	Date and Time
Cambridge Chesterton Sports Centre, Gilbert Road, Cambridge, CB4 3NY	Mon 4 th - Wed 6 th April, 12pm-8pm
Godmanchester Godmanchester Primary School, Park Lane, Godmanchester, PE29 2AG	Thur 7 th - Fri 8 th April, 12pm-8pm and Sat 9 th April, 10am-4pm
Huntingdon Huntingdon Marriott Hotel, Kingfisher Way, Hinchingbrooke Business Park, Huntingdon, PE29 6FL	Fri 22 nd April, 12pm-8pm and Sat 23 rd April, 10am-4pm

There will also be a smaller travelling exhibition on a specially-equipped Bendybus, parked at the following locations:

Exhibition Venue	Date and Time
Girton The Pavilion, Girton Recreation Ground, Cambridge Road, Girton, CB3 0FH	Tue 12 th April, 12pm-8pm
Milton Tesco, Cambridge Road, Milton, CB4 4AZ	Wed 13 th April, 12pm-8pm
Fenstanton The George PH, High Street, Fenstanton, PE28 9LQ	Thur 14 th April, 12pm-8pm
Brampton Brampton Garden Centre, Buckden Road, Brampton, PE18 8NF	Fri 15 th April, 12pm-8pm
Bar Hill Tesco, Viking Way, Bar Hill, CB3 8EL	Sat 16 th April, 10am-4pm

Documents illustrating the proposals in more detail can be seen at public libraries in Cambridge, Huntingdon, St Ives, Bar Hill, Buckden and Histon, and on the Highways Agency website.

What Happens Next?

After carefully considering all comments and representations the Secretary of State for Transport will decide on a preferred route to take forward. Once the Preferred Route Announcement has been made, a Contractor will be appointed to develop the detailed design of the scheme. This will lead to the publication of draft Orders under the Highways Act 1980. Depending on the nature and weight of any objections to the Orders, a Public Inquiry may be held.

What is Being Done Now?

The Highways Agency has an ongoing programme of improvements on the A14. This includes short term measures to improve safety on this section. For details please visit the Highways Agency website or contact the Information Line.

Provisional Programme

Public Consultation	March to June 2005
Preferred Route Announcement	Early 2006
Draft Orders Published	2007
Public Inquiry (if required)	2008
Construction Start	2008/09
Opening in Stages	In the period 2011-15

Progress will depend on the response to this consultation, the number and nature of objections to the proposals and whether a Public Inquiry is required.

Your Views

Your views are important to us. Please comment on the proposals by completing and returning the enclosed questionnaire (no stamp required) before Thursday 30th June 2005. You may also respond to the questionnaire on-line via the website or write to the Highways Agency at the postal or email address shown below.

The information you send us may need to be passed to colleagues within the Agency or agents acting on our behalf and/or published in a summary of responses received in response to this consultation. We will assume that you are content for us to do this. Please ensure that if you want your name or response to be kept confidential, you state this clearly in your response. (Confidential responses will be included in any statistical summary of numbers of comments received and views expressed.) If you are replying by e-mail, your consent overrides any confidentiality disclaimer that is generated by your organisation's IT system, unless you specifically include a request to the contrary in the main text of your submission to us.

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Further copies of this leaflet are available from:

Highways Agency Publications
Telephone: **0870 1226 236**

Please quote reference number: **HA65/05**

This leaflet has been prepared in accordance with the principles of the Cabinet Office Code of Practice on Consultation. A copy of the criteria is available on request, or on the Cabinet Office's website at: www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/regulation/Consultation/Code.asp

The New A14 Route

The route of the new A14 is the same for both the CHUMMS Strategy and the Alternative Proposal.

From the western end of the scheme, the new dual carriageway would leave the existing A14 east of Ellington and connect with a new interchange with the A1 approximately 2 miles south of the existing junction at Brampton Hut.

The new route would then pass south of the Buckden landfill site before crossing the River Great Ouse and the East Coast Main Line railway on an elevated viaduct to the north of Buckden Marina and the village of Offord Cluny. The route would continue east across open farmland, crossing the A1198 south of the Wood Green Animal Shelter, passing north of the villages of Hilton and Conington to a new interchange with the existing A14 just south of Fen Drayton.

Between Fen Drayton and the eastern end of the scheme at Fen Ditton, the A14 would be widened on the existing alignment, except for a section to the north-east of Bar Hill. An improved interchange with the A428 and M11 would be provided at Girton (M11 Junction 14).

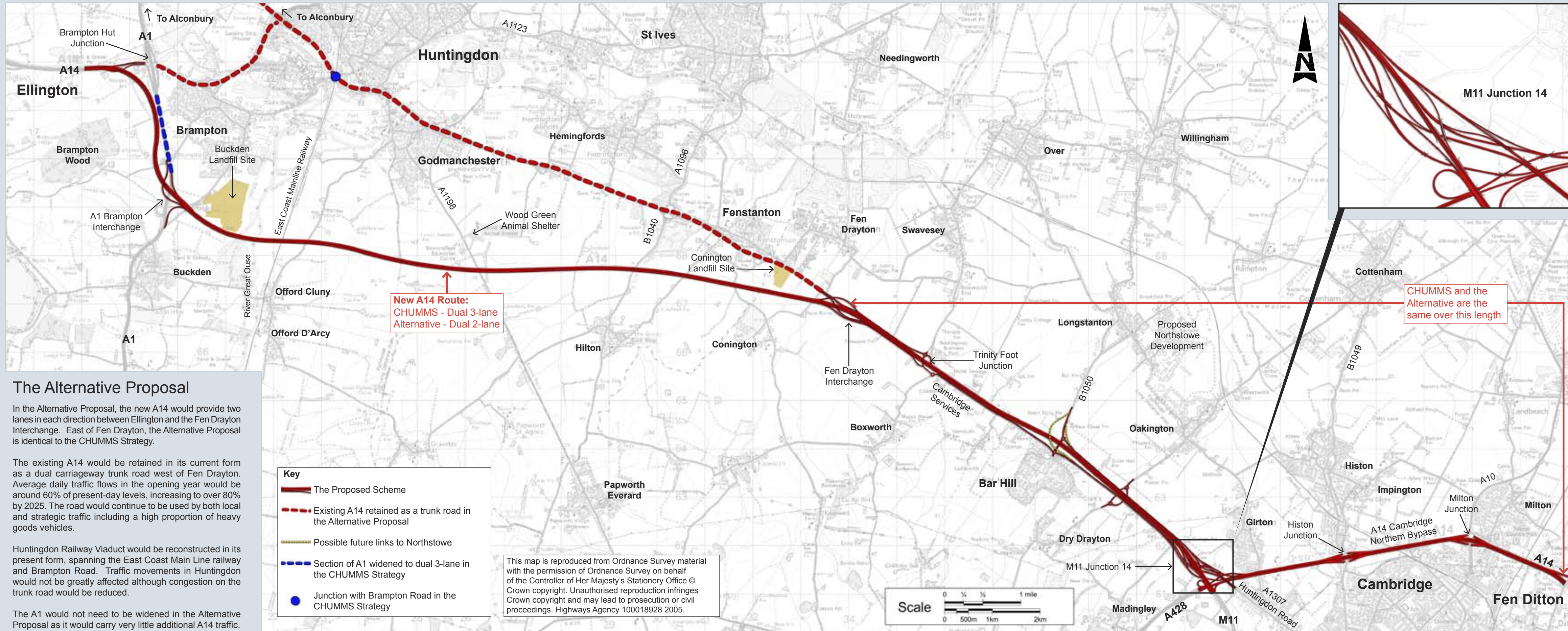
The CHUMMS Strategy

In the CHUMMS Strategy, the new A14 dual carriageway would provide three lanes in each direction along its entire length, except between Ellington and the A1 where only two lanes are required.

West of Fen Drayton Interchange, the existing A14 would be retained as a local road, skirting the west side of Huntingdon. Average daily traffic flows on the existing A14 in the opening year would be 40% of present-day levels, increasing to around 50% by 2025.

Huntingdon Railway Viaduct would be demolished and the existing A14 connected into a new junction with Brampton Road. This would allow direct access to Huntingdon station and enable traffic to approach Huntingdon town centre from an alternative direction relieving Godmanchester and the medieval bridge. This junction would increase traffic on Brampton Road and the south-east quadrant of the ring road, with the possible consequences of increased congestion, delays and some localised effects on the environment.

The A1 would be widened to three lanes in each direction between the new Brampton Interchange and the existing junction at Brampton Hut. A separate scheme is under consideration which would widen the A1 to three lanes between Brampton and Alconbury in view of the additional A14 traffic to and from the North using that section of the A1.



The Alternative Proposal

In the Alternative Proposal, the new A14 would provide two lanes in each direction between Ellington and the Fen Drayton Interchange. East of Fen Drayton, the Alternative Proposal is identical to the CHUMMS Strategy.

The existing A14 would be retained in its current form as a dual carriageway trunk road west of Fen Drayton. Average daily traffic flows in the opening year would be around 60% of present-day levels, increasing to over 80% by 2025. The road would continue to be used by both local and strategic traffic including a high proportion of heavy goods vehicles.

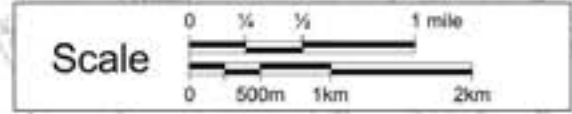
Huntingdon Railway Viaduct would be reconstructed in its present form, spanning the East Coast Main Line railway and Brampton Road. Traffic movements in Huntingdon would not be greatly affected although congestion on the trunk road would be reduced.

The A1 would not need to be widened in the Alternative Proposal as it would carry very little additional A14 traffic.

Key

- The Proposed Scheme
- - - Existing A14 retained as a trunk road in the Alternative Proposal
- Possible future links to Northstowe
- - - Section of A1 widened to dual 3-lane in the CHUMMS Strategy
- Junction with Brampton Road in the CHUMMS Strategy

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Local Roads

New local roads alongside the widened A14 between Fen Drayton Interchange and M11 Junction 14 would provide dedicated routes for local traffic and a safer environment for all road users.

At Fen Drayton, traffic from the west on the existing A14 would be able to join the new A14 or continue on to the local road at Trinity Foot.

Between junctions at Trinity Foot and Bar Hill, a single carriageway local road would be provided on the southern side of the new A14, which would provide access to Cambridge Services.

There would be no direct access onto the new A14 at Bar Hill. Westbound traffic would use the local road to join the A14 at Fen Drayton Interchange or continue on the existing A14 towards Huntingdon. Eastbound traffic from Bar Hill would use the local road to gain access to the A14, M11 and Huntingdon Road at the improved M11 Junction 14.

East of Bar Hill, a dual carriageway local road would be provided, with two lanes in each direction split either side of the new A14. The eastbound carriageway would be located on the northern side of the new A14 with the westbound on the southern side. Additional slip roads may be provided at Bar Hill Junction to provide direct access from the local roads onto the B1050 to Northstowe.

M11 Junction 14

M11 Junction 14 would be substantially re-modelled as part of the A14 scheme. The existing southern 'cloverleaf' loop would be removed and a new link road provided between the Cambridge Northern Bypass and the westbound A14.

Additional links would be provided to connect the new local roads, both east and westbound, with the M11, A14 Cambridge Northern Bypass and A1307 Huntingdon Road.

Existing movements between the A14 and A428, the A14 and M11 and between the A14 and A1307 Huntingdon Road would be maintained as at present.

Cambridge Northern Bypass

The Cambridge Northern Bypass would be widened to three lanes in each direction. Between M11 Junction 14 and Histon Junction an auxiliary lane in both directions would be provided to safely accommodate the traffic joining and leaving the A14 at these two junctions. Only two lanes would be provided under Milton Junction, with a lane drop/gain each side of the junction to provide safe stacking space for traffic queuing back onto the A14. There would also be a lane drop/gain at Fen Ditton Junction with two lanes continuing as at present.