

Response to the 'A14 Challenge' – Campaign for Better Transport

Introduction

Campaign for Better Transport opposed the Highways Agency's proposals to widen the A14 between Ellington and Fen Ditton. Our reasons for opposition were:

- At £1.3bn the scheme was unaffordable and carried insurmountable opportunity costs
- The scheme would have significantly increased greenhouse gas emissions: 132,000 tonnes in year one alone
- Option identification was out of date and consideration of alternatives was inadequate
- The scheme would not solve congestion because the induced traffic would have outstripped capacity increases
- It would have increased traffic on surrounding roads, not just on the A14; increasing severance and the likelihood of collisions in the wider area, even if individual drivers on the A14 were less likely to be involved in a crash
- The scheme would have had a large adverse impact on the landscape, and other impacts on historical resources and biodiversity
- The scheme conflicted with Government transport policies and policies on the environment and planning, encouraging car commuting, ribbon development and locking in unsustainable travel patterns through greater car dependency

We do not believe that progressing a similar road scheme as a privately financed toll road is viable. In a recent report, we have set out the risks to investors of toll roads in the UK based on the experience of the M6 Toll, where expected toll revenue has not materialised while congestion on the M6 has continued to worsen, and the Mersey Gateway Bridge, which has struggled to attract investors despite significant financial guarantees from local authorities.¹ And if a system of 'shadow tolling' were employed instead, in a similar process to the current PFI/DBFO contracts run by the Highways Agency, the eventual cost to the public would be even greater than the original scheme.

However it may be funded, we recommend that instead of pouring money into such a project, packages of alternatives should be investigated to improve conditions in the area for considerably less outlay. Therefore, we welcome the opportunity to propose new ideas for investigation as part of the A14 Challenge.

¹ Briefing on the risks and benefits of toll road investment in the UK, Campaign for Better Transport, November 2011, <http://www.bettertransport.org.uk/system/files/toll-road-investment-briefing.pdf>

Challenges

The challenges identified in the A14 Study document are:²

Economic challenges

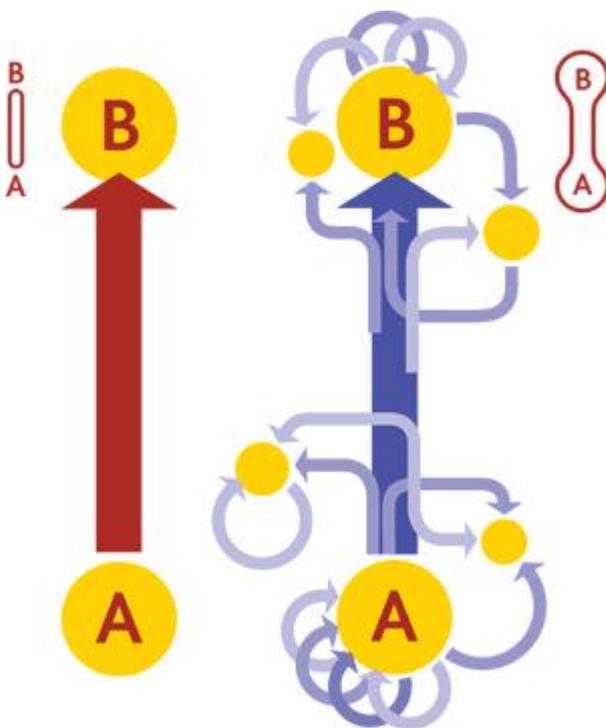
- Lost productive time, due to regular congestion and delays, including from diversions onto the local road network when there are problems on the A14
- Supporting growth of the Greater Cambridge Area, enabling additional housing and employment
- Issues with access to labour markets in Huntingdon and Cambridge

Quality of life (social and environmental) challenges

- Welfare impacts, from the effects of congestion on drivers, including limiting the attractiveness of working in the area
- Accidents, with associated economic and social costs
- Air quality, health and noise, with four Air Quality Management Areas already along the A14 corridor in the study area

Aims of proposed solutions

We recognise that congestion has complex causes:



Key to our proposals is the principle of 'corridor planning' – the understanding that congestion on a trunk road is not due solely to cars travelling from A to B along that road, but a consequence of many different longer and shorter journeys adding to the total weight of traffic.

The picture on the left of this diagram from Campaign for Better Transport's strategic roads planning briefing in 2009,³ shows the way many people assume travel on a road corridor proceeds, with most trips simply running from A to B. But the picture on the right is more accurate: there are some trips passing through the whole corridor but also plenty of shorter journeys which only use the trunk road for a short part of their journey.

If we only think about A to B journeys (or journeys from beyond A to beyond B), the solutions to congestion will appear very limited. But if we focus attention on the shorter trips adding to congestion at either end, a range

of more imaginative measures will be available.

The images reproduced below from the A14 Study document show clearly that the situation on the A14 around Huntingdon and Cambridge fits this model, with the highest congestion found close to the urban centres in the morning and afternoon peaks. Therefore, congestion on this stretch of road is likely to be highly susceptible to measures aimed at shorter journeys – not simply at longer-distance traffic.

² A14 Study Output 1, Steer Davies Gleave for the Department of Transport, December 2011, <http://assets.dft.gov.uk/consultations/dft-20111212/a14-study.pdf>

³ Widening motorways will worsen, rather than solve, congestion, Campaign for Better Transport, July 2009, <http://www.bettertransport.org.uk/system/files/Strategic-Roads-Planning-Briefing-July09.pdf>

FIGURE 4.5 AM PEAK SPEEDS ON A14



FIGURE 4.6 PM PEAK SPEEDS ON A14



Following these principles, our proposals therefore start with a range of measures aimed at shorter distance journeys – particularly commuting – into Huntingdon and Cambridge, before moving on to tackle freight transport and longer-distance car journeys.

We recommend the solutions to the challenges are based on the following practical aims:

- A. Reducing the number of cars using the A14 for local commuting**
- B. Taking long-distance freight traffic away from the A14 and onto rail**
- C. Improving traffic-management, safety and resilience on the current A14**
- D. Provide public transport alternatives for longer distance car journeys within the A14 corridor**

With national traffic trends already running lower than forecast at the time of the original proposals, measures like the guided busway and demand management within Cambridge City starting to have an effect on congestion in the area, and rail improvements underway, a 'breathing space' has now been opened up with the opportunity to considerably reduce congestion on the existing A14 at a much lower cost than the previous proposals.

Achieving these aims would have benefits in relation to all the challenges identified and, in addition, would have significant benefits in terms of climate change emissions. In our opinion, the focus of the A14 Study document on cutting carbon dioxide simply by reducing congestion fails to take into account the very significant gains that can be made through demand reduction and mode shift. To give just one example of the additional carbon benefits given by this approach: rail freight has been shown to produce 70% less carbon dioxide than the equivalent road journey, even in free-flow conditions.⁴

Measures for implementation

Rather than revisiting old ideas for A14 widening (however they may be funded) we recommend that time is spent now investigating and planning a more sustainable package of measures to work towards the aims given above. The Cambridgeshire Transport Innovation Fund (TIF) proposal from 2008⁵ contains a number of measures that have not yet been implemented, due to failure of funding bids (for example to the Local Sustainable Transport Fund) or because of local budget restrictions, and these could be revisited.

The Cambridgeshire TIF proposals also showed that some promising results have been achieved in terms of walking, cycling and public transport in Cambridge City, and the city also scored better than average in Campaign for Better Transport's 'Car Dependency Scorecard' in 2010.⁶ However, much more could be done to improve the situation in Cambridge and similar progress has yet to be realised in other towns and cities in the area, suggesting that there is a large untapped potential for removing local traffic from the A14 using sustainable transport policies.

The proposals listed in this document comprise a wide-ranging list of measures, from simple or well-developed proposals that could be implemented almost immediately to more exploratory, strategic proposals for new infrastructure that need further work. Taken together, the projects proposed up to 2019 would cost far less than a major new road, and would do more to strengthen the local economy due to their focus on long-term jobs from new services and demand management measures rather than the short-term benefits of a single large engineering project.

⁴ Separate submission to the A14 Challenge by Freight on Rail

⁵ Cambridgeshire Transport Innovation Fund Package Outline Proposal for Funding, Cambridgeshire County Council, May 2008, <http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/07EE8F74-A6EF-48B9-ADB9-4528B2631405/0/FINALOutlineProposalforFunding.pdf>

⁶ Car Dependency Scorecard 2010, Campaign for Better Transport, September 2010, http://www.bettertransport.org.uk/campaigns/traffic_reduction/scorecard

In the long term, these proposals would also contribute towards the UK meeting its commitments under the Climate Change Act 2008, and demonstrate that problems on the strategic network can be solved in a manner compatible with climate change targets, principles of sustainable development and improved quality of life.

Our suggestions are summarised here and set out in more detail in the answers to the Challenge questions below.

A. Reducing the number of cars using the A14 for local commuting

- Widespread demand management and reduction measures across Cambridgeshire to reduce local traffic on the A14 and in the wider area. These should include comprehensive ‘Smarter Choices’ programmes of workplace, retail and leisure facility travel plans, marketing and promotion of non-car options, better information for travellers and smart tickets for use across different services
- Improved local bus services (which are currently being cut back by the County Council) to reduce rural isolation, improve access to jobs and services and encourage mode shift
- A new park and ride facility at Brampton Racecourse
- Non-transport interventions aimed at reducing the need to travel, such as locating healthcare, shopping and post office services close to where people live, or changing plans for new housing to create more compact, mixed-use developments closer to existing jobs and amenities
- A workplace parking levy (WPL) implemented across the region (not just in Cambridge City, where it might encourage workplaces to relocate out of town). This would have benefits in encouraging car-sharing and other measures associated with workplace travel plans, and would also help to raise revenue to pay for other measures in this plan

B. Taking long-distance freight traffic away from the A14 and onto rail

- There is no reason why rail’s mode share at Felixstowe could not be brought up to the same level currently achieved at Southampton port (39%) or even higher
- This could be achieved alongside the gauge improvements on the Felixstowe–Nuneaton rail line currently being implemented, with new signalling along the route to enable much more freight traffic from Felixstowe to be moved onto rail for access to the Midlands
- We recommend that all measures in stage 2 of the Felixstowe–Nuneaton upgrade are brought forward to help achieve these aims
- Further investigation of north–south rail routes to the east of London should also be investigated to divert freight from the Channel ports that currently uses a northern route via the M25, M11 A14 and A1

C. Improving traffic-management safety and resilience on the current A14

- Continue with repairs of the Huntingdon railway viaduct to retain the existing A14
- Carry out work to upgrade of the A428–A421 link from the A14/M11 to the A1 and M1 to create a high quality diversion route when incidents occur on the A14, reducing the impact of this on other local roads. We believe this could be done economically without full dualling, and the options should be fully assessed
- Small-scale modifications on the A14 to improve safety and reduce collisions (a cause of major congestion incidents on the A14) and community severance
- Wider use of 3D scanners to reduce police time dealing with incidents
- A further package of intelligent transport systems (ITS), including active traffic management (ATM)
- A review and enhancement of road safety measures aimed at HGVs, including checking and testing of non-UK freight lorries at ports, compliance with statutory hours for HGV drivers and lane management for HGVs

D. Provide public transport alternatives for longer distance car journeys within the A14 corridor

- Continued expansion of Cambridgeshire Guided Busway services and route frequency

- Improved east–west passenger rail links to improve the competitiveness of rail compared with road into and out of the region around the A14
- Facilities, funding and co-ordination between operators for the introduction of new express bus services between Cambridge and Rugby to provide easy access to longer-distance rail services

Responses to the individual A14 Challenge questions

1. Tell us about your proposed solution. Which of the challenges identified in the A14 Study document does it address?

AND

2. Describe your proposal in terms of the changes needed to infrastructure, services, or behaviours. Would any new legislation or powers be needed to deliver your proposal?

AND

4. How much would the solution cost? Which of the costs are one-offs, e.g. for construction, as opposed to on-going year to year costs? When would these costs be incurred?

We recommend above that the solutions to the challenges identified in the A14 Study document are based on the following practical aims:

- Reducing the number of cars using the A14 for local commuting
- Taking long-distance freight traffic away from the A14 and onto rail
- Improving traffic management, safety and resilience on the current A14
- Provide public transport alternatives for longer distance car journeys within the A14 corridor

Our proposals for measures to achieve these aims are given below under each heading, and approximate timings and costs are included, where possible.

A. Reducing the number of cars using the A14 for local commuting

Widespread demand management measures across Cambridgeshire

Demand management measures – particularly when implemented via a comprehensive ‘Smarter Choices’ programme of workplace, retail and leisure facility travel plans, marketing and promotion of non-car options, better facilities for walking and cycling, and better information for travellers – are very good value interventions, with estimated benefit-cost ratios of up to 22:1 in areas where similar measures had not been tried before.⁷

These should be implemented not just in Cambridge City, but throughout the whole A14 corridor, ideally under one area-wide ‘brand’ for maximum impact and synergy between the different initiatives. This kind of integrated approach has been shown to ensure both maximum value for money and the maximum effect on reducing traffic and would result in the most benefit for the A14 and the wider area.

In 2011, the performance of local authorities’ plans for LTP3 funding of sustainable travel measures similar to Smarter Choices was assessed by the consultancy Halcrow for Friends of the Earth and Sustrans.⁸ This found that Cambridgeshire was spending just £250,000 in 2011/12 on these measures, which is just 7% of

⁷ Goodwin P, Opportunities for improving transport and getting better value for money, by changing the allocation of public expenditures to transport, University of the West of England, February 2010, <http://eprints.uwe.ac.uk/13130/>

⁸ Hickman R & Pharoah T, Moving Towards Smarter Travel, Halcrow, August 2011, http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/reports/sustrans_ltp_report.pdf

the equivalent level of spending per head of population in the successful Sustainable Travel Towns pilot projects.

Halcrow estimated that bringing spending on these measures in Cambridgeshire up to the equivalent level of the STTs would mean increasing the budget to £3.4 million per year, and we believe this should be implemented at a minimum as part of the A14 programme. To have the highest impact on commuting traffic along the A14, workplace travel planning could be the focus of these programmes during the first few years. This would complement the workplace parking levy proposed elsewhere in this document and provide additional incentives for employers to take steps such as priority spaces for car-sharers. Multi-employer schemes of this nature could be facilitated at large employment sites such as the Cambridge Science Park.

Another good value addition to any Smarter Choices programme would be area-wide integrated smart ticketing across all public transport modes. This would simplify public transport use for many people and remove some existing barriers to use, such as the fact that each operator on the guided busway currently issues separate, non-interoperable tickets. An analysis of existing smart and integrated tickets carried out for PTEG⁹ found that the system increased patronage of public transport in the range of 6% to 20%, and a report for Transport Scotland in 2011 on a national scheme that included rail found that there would be nearly £600m of benefits with capital costs of £7.1m and operating costs of £21.9m over an 11-year appraisal period.¹⁰ The benefit–cost ratio of a smart integrated national system was found to be 19.7.

Timing	2012-16
Cost estimate:	£25.6m

(An estimate of the cost of smart ticketing for the East of England region, based on the Transport Scotland example, is £4m in capital costs and £2m per year in operating costs)

Improving local bus services

Subsidised local bus services within Cambridgeshire are currently being extensively cut by the County Council.

Initially, the council proposed to take £2.7 million out of the bus network by phasing out all subsidised bus services and 16 services have already been withdrawn. A legal challenge from a bus user supported by Campaign for Better Transport has led to the council agreeing to review its plans. The new proposals recently announced aim to continue with the withdrawal of bus subsidies and invest £1.5m under a new banner 'Cambridgeshire Future Transport' for the support of small localised franchises. However, the lack of success of pilot projects has raised question marks about the viability of this franchise model.¹¹

Instead of making cuts to bus services, Cambridgeshire should be increasing investment, by applying for additional funding through the Better Bus Areas initiative for example, to enhance local buses. New services provided during this process should be targeted at routes that would do most to take local traffic away from the A14 where it adds to congestion experienced close to urban areas. These might include rural feeder routes to rail stations or park and ride sites, or new services that link up with the guided busway or new express buses.

⁹ The Benefits of Simplified and Integrated Ticketing in Public Transport; Booz & Co for PTEG, 2009, <http://www.pteg.net/NR/rdonlyres/EACFCEE0-F212-467F-B342-2B9B9538DEED/0/integratedticketingreport221009.pdf>

¹⁰ Smart & Integrated Ticketing Report for Scotland, 2001, <http://www.transportscotland.gov.uk/strategy-and-research/publications-and-consultations/j13684-03.htm>

¹¹ Taxpayers fork out £120,000 for one passenger, Cambridgeshire Liberal Democrats blog, 27 January 2012, <http://cambslibdems.org.uk/en/article/2012/555369/taxpayers-fork-out-120-000-for-one-passenger>

The specific funding available through Better Bus Areas funding is currently constrained by a strong preference for funding to be given to 'large urban' areas, so the case would have to be made that relieving the A14 fitted with these aims, or funds sought through other programs or provided directly by the County Council. The Department for Transport should also consider relaxing its restrictions so that any area with congestion problems can be given preference for these funds.

Timing	2012-2019
Cost estimate for new services:	£4m pa

A new park and ride facility at Brampton Racecourse

Plans are well advanced for expanding the St Ives park and ride site for the guided busway, and the £2 million required for this could be funded immediately from the £20 million already awarded in the Autumn Statement for short-term measures. Brampton Racecourse provides an ideal location for a new park and ride facility near Huntingdon, and this opportunity should also be rapidly investigated and assessed.

The racecourse lies on the A14 itself, and park and ride buses could provide a direct route via the A14 to the guided busway at St Ives for local commuters. Local shuttle buses with high frequencies at peak times to Brampton, Huntingdon mainline station and Hinchingsbrooke Hospital – all within 2 miles of the racecourse – would also help to reduce traffic on local roads. (Also note that many of the measures proposed here work in concert, so that workplace parking controls would add to demand for this facility and it could also be served by the express bus services discussed later in this document.)

Timing	2014-
Cost estimate	£5m

Non-transport interventions aimed at reducing the need to travel

Spatial plans and strategies in the wider area should be reviewed to make sure that they contain policies compatible with the need to reduce travel in the area. These might include locating healthcare, shopping and post office services close to where people live, or changing plans for the location of new housing to create more compact, mixed-use developments closer to existing jobs and amenities.

In addition, any housing or business development areas in local plans that are predicated upon the previous plans to widen the A14 should be removed or relocated, and new policies should be added to state that future developments would not be permitted if they would significantly add to traffic on the A14.

This intervention would not require a large amount of investment, but it would need to involve appropriate processes for reviewing and changing County and local council spatial plans to ensure that they do not contain policies that assume or contribute to continued traffic growth on the A14.

Timing	2012-
Cost estimate	£2m

Workplace parking controls

A workplace parking levy (WPL) implemented across the region would have benefits in encouraging car-sharing and other measures associated with workplace travel plans, and would also help to raise revenue to pay for other measures.

A WPL has been looked at previously by Cambridgeshire County Council and rejected but given the priority within the A14 Challenge to look at new ways of funding transport improvements, it should be revisited now. This measure would not only raise revenue to support sustainable transport but also complement other measures in the package proposed here, such as the ‘Smarter Choices’ workplace travel plans.

Any new levy should apply across the County to cover out-of-town locations, and should not be restricted to Cambridge City which has protected well-connected areas for development around the city edge in its draft Development Strategy,¹² as this might encourage workplaces to locate in business park locations instead, leading to longer commutes and conflicting with the aim of reducing the need to travel.

Timing	2014-
Cost estimate	Net, this measure would raise revenue

B. Taking long-distance freight traffic away from the A14 and onto rail

Improvements to the Felixstowe–Nuneaton rail line

A separate submission by Freight on Rail details how the A14 Study document underestimates the potential for increased rail market share for freight coming from the Haven ports. It gives the example of Southampton port, where a gauge upgrade to allow larger containers to be carried on standard rail wagons, completed in February 2011, has increased rail’s share of the freight market out of Southampton from 30% to 39%.

We agree with Freight on Rail that the A14 Study’s assumption that rail’s market share in the A14 corridor cannot rise is flawed, and that there is no reason why a market share for rail freight comparable to Southampton’s, or higher, could not be achieved at Felixstowe.

- Planned gauge improvements on the Felixstowe–Nuneaton rail line will be completed in 2014 and bring considerable new capacity, including the ability for larger containers to be carried on standard wagons. However, the stage 2 capacity enhancements on this route are as yet unfunded and should be given a high priority as part of a new package of measures for the A14 corridor
- To reach its potential, signalling along the whole length of this line – including at Leicester (which would also benefit passenger services) – should be improved to reduce the headway required between trains and allow for increased frequency. If this extra capacity were provided, the number of trains in and out of Felixstowe could be increased from 29 to 50, resulting in the removal of 40 million lorry miles from the A14 corridor per year, increasing rail’s mode share from 25% to up to 40%
- The other measures in Stage 2 of the F2N upgrade should also be fully funded. These include:
 - Double-tracking Ely–Soham (announced already in the Autumn Statement)
 - Syston resignalling
 - Four-tracking Syston–Wigston
 - Grade separation of Wigston North Junction
 - Gauge clearance Syston–Stoke (also announced in the Autumn Statement)
- In addition, to reduce the effect of additional trains on the road network, level crossings on roads with high traffic levels should, over time, be removed and replaced by under- or overpass crossings
- For future Control Periods, further investigation of routes for north–south railfreight to the east of London should be carried out. A number of different options have been put forward over the years for new north–south freight routes, and a route to the east of London would have the benefit of taking further freight traffic from the A14 by diverting containers from the Channel ports that are currently

¹² Cambridge Development Strategy Issues and Options, 2007, <http://cambridge.gov.uk/public/pdfs/Cambridge-Development-Strategy-Issues-and-Options.pdf>

going north on HGVs via the M25, M11 A14 and A1. Lines via Barking, Seven Sisters, Cheshunt and Ware are currently in place, and a new line north of Hertford to Stevenage could be provided (this would have additional benefits in providing a route for east–west trains to reach Stansted Airport). This freight route would be all electric if the Barking to Gospel Oak line was electrified. Any capacity issues could be resolved if the section between Cheshunt and the junction near Rye House was upgraded to four tracks

- To further increase the use of rail, an improved national network of intermodal terminals for freight interchange would also be needed close to business markets and key supply chain routes. We welcome the Government’s Strategic Rail Freight Interchange Policy Guidance issued in November 2011 ahead of the national networks policy statement (NPS) to help with the development of this infrastructure. Because most of the freight on railways out of Felixstowe is destined for the West Midlands or beyond, these nationally important hubs may not necessarily fall within the study area close to the A14, but their development will also help aid congestion on the road

Timing	2014-
Cost estimates	
Stage 2 of F2N:	£150m
Level crossing removal:	Unknown
Electrified north–south rail freight route (long term):	Unknown

C. Improving traffic-management safety and resilience on the current A14

Continue to repair the Huntingdon railway viaduct to retain the existing A14

Timing	2012-
Cost estimate:	Programme currently in place

Review the upgrade of the A428–A421 link from the A14/M11 to the A1 and M1 to improve this diversion route for the A14, reducing the impact on other local roads

Two sections of dualling for this diversion route during incidents on the A14 have now been completed – the A421 from the A1 to the M1 and the A428 from the A14/M11 junction to Caxton Gibbet.

The final section of work to create a suitable diversion route when the A14 is affected by incidents runs from the A1 south of St Neots to Caxton Gibbet and is so far unfunded and should be looked at again. The latest cost estimate for a complete dual-carriageway on this section was £380m¹³, and the value for money of this intervention is questionable, so the scheme should be re-investigated and other less expensive improvements sought.

These could include creating a dynamically managed new road plan, for example a central tidal flow lane on a minimally widened road, or new lanes that are opened for traffic only during problems on the A14 or restricted to high occupancy vehicles (HOV lanes). These measures would reduce the induced traffic that would come with a widening project, and would also support the aims of Smarter Choices interventions, such as workplace travel plans that encourage car-sharing.

¹³ Huntingdonshire District Council Infrastructure Project List, 2011, <http://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/SiteCollectionDocuments/HDCCMS/Documents/Planning%20Documents/PDF%20Documents/Local%20Development%20Framework/Huntingdonshire%20Infrastructure%20Project%20List.pdf>

Timing	2013-
Cost estimate:	£150m

Small-scale modifications on the A14 to reduce collisions and severance

The A14 Study document identified collisions as a cause of major congestion incidents on the A14 that contribute to congestion on local roads, and some work on the road was announced in the Autumn Statement 2011.¹⁴

The A14 Challenge announcement press release says: “On 29th November as part of the Growth Review, the National Infrastructure Plan announced measures to improve the A14 including an improved bypass for Kettering, £20m for immediate improvements including junction upgrades at the Girton and Spittals interchanges, additional signage for drivers and a study into longer term improvements between Ellington and Fen Ditton.”¹⁵

We would welcome the opportunity to comment on and influence the details of these proposals for immediate improvements.

A further £20m programme of small road improvements focused specifically on reducing the incidence and impact of collisions, and community severance, would also be useful as part of a package of measures for improving conditions on the A14. Problems at junctions are a continuing issue for this section of A14 as identified in the A14 Study document, so these could be focused on the remaining at-grade junctions with local roads. This work could go hand-in-hand with the construction of slip roads/lay-bys and bridges for the ‘virtual stations’ proposed for express buses later in this document.

Timing	2012-
Cost estimate:	£20m

Wider use of 3D scanners to reduce police time dealing with incidents

Cambridgeshire Police successfully bid for £77,000 from the Department for Transport to pay for one new 3D scanner in December 2011.¹⁶ These help in assessing complex incidents by rapidly creating a 3D image of a crash scene, and also help to reduce the time needed to record details before the road can be reopened.

Additional funds for four more of these devices could be provided immediately to police in the area so that more incidents on the A14 could be covered by one of these scanners.

Timing	2012
Cost estimate:	£0.3m

A further package of intelligent transport systems (ITS) on the A14 including greater use of active traffic management (ATM)

¹⁴ Autumn Statement, Treasury, 2011, http://cdn.hm-treasury.gov.uk/autumn_statement.pdf

¹⁵ DfT press release, A14 Challenge launched, 12 December 2011, <http://www.dft.gov.uk/news/press-releases/dft-press20111212>

¹⁶ DfT press release, Government awards Police forces £2.7 million to tackle motorway closures, 29 December 2011, <http://www.dft.gov.uk/news/press-releases/dft-press-20111229>

Active traffic management (ATM) is currently in place for the A14 from Felixstowe to the M1 apart from the section between Fen Ditton to Huntingdon.¹⁷ With the cancellation of the previous ATM plan for this section, this should also be added immediately back into the Highways Agency programme.

ATM, including driver information, lower speed limits at peak times and the use of average speed cameras to enforce the speed limit, can also contribute to reducing collisions and their knock-on effects on congestion.

Timing	2012?
Cost estimate:	£18m

A review and enhancement of road safety measures aimed at HGVs, including checking and testing of non-UK freight lorries at ports, compliance with statutory hours for HGV drivers, and lane management for HGVs

Existing DfT measures to improve the safety of HGVs using the A14 include checking/testing of non-UK freight lorries at ports, validation of the papers of non-UK drivers, and police checks on statutory hours and breaks for HGV drivers.

These measures should be reviewed and enhanced with additional resources to contribute more to reducing the incidence of collisions involving HGVs on the A14.

Another useful proposal that could make a significant difference to safety and traffic flow would be lane management – confining HGVs to the left-hand lane (slow overtaking causes much of the congestion by blocking both lanes of traffic for considerable lengths of time). This would not be particularly costly to introduce or enforce, and would also help to improve road safety since drivers of left-hand-drive HGVs often pull out to overtake despite not being able to adequately check the traffic in the faster lane. Any knock-on effects on the operation of the express buses also proposed here should be carefully considered, however, before taking this step.

Timing	2012-
Cost estimate:	£2m

D. Provide public transport alternatives for longer distance car journeys within the A14 corridor

Extending the Cambridgeshire Guided Busway services

The Cambridgeshire Guided Busway has proved successful and the frequency of services has already been increased in response to high demand. The potential of this facility should continue to be developed, particularly to provide later and more frequent services, to give more priority to buses on the non-guided sections, and to solve the problem of tickets not being integrated between operators.

More should also be done to add new express services that leave out the slow non-guided section of the route between St Ives and Huntingdon, in order to increase the attractiveness of the busway for these longer journeys (the journey time from Huntingdon railway station to Cambridge is currently 76 minutes). These bus services would be commercially viable if well-promoted, frequent and quick enough, and could use the existing A14 for this section.

¹⁷ A14 Corridor Traffic Management Scheme, Highways Agency <http://www.highways.gov.uk/roads/projects/22585.aspx>

In the future, a new busway could be provided in parallel with the A14 between St Ives and Huntingdon to improve long-distance journey times further, and further services to the new Alconbury Airfield development and other developments north of the A14 at Northstowe and Waterbeach should also be provided as these progress. The new developments should also be planned and built with high levels of car-free commuting and other travel in mind.

Timing	2012-
Cost estimate:	
More bus priority measures on non-guided sections:	£3m
Services:	Most are likely to be commercially viable, although initial support may be needed for some routes.
Extended busway spurs to new developments:	Unknown, longer term

Improved east-west passenger rail links

There are a range of medium- to long-term passenger rail proposals that could make a significant difference to the options for passenger rail travel between the midlands and the east of England. These include:

- Development of the Cambridge–Bedford rail link should be prioritised (the ‘central section’ of a full east–west link) to join up with new Oxford–Bedford link (the ‘western section’) that has recently been brought forward. A number of routes have been discussed, including a reinstated line via Sandy (recommended in a study for the East–West Rail Consortium, along with another new east-west link running via Luton–Stevenage–Cambridge¹⁸) and a new route Bedford–Northampton–St Neots–Cambridge (as recommended by the London to South Midlands Multimodal Study in 2003¹⁹). The latter route is discussed in more detail in a separate submission to this challenge from Cambridgeshire Campaign for Better Transport²⁰
- Just prior to the Autumn statement, Transport Minister Theresa Villiers stated in a Commons debate:²¹ “...it is generally accepted that if the western section get the go-ahead, that will be the time for more substantial work to see whether we cannot take forward the rest of the project at some future point.” We believe that a full options study into east–west rail links should be carried out immediately with the support of the Department for Transport
- The Cambridge–Bedford rail link would have nationally beneficial economic impacts, creating easy, quick passenger services along an ‘arc of economic growth’ and linking up the new industries that are based in towns and cities from Cambridge to Oxford
- This route would also significantly reduce public transport journey times between Cambridge and Birmingham. This is currently 160 minutes by rail and could be reduced to 100 minutes, making it marginally shorter than the same journey by road – a crucial factor in making rail a competitive option for journeys on this corridor. It is worth noting that widening plans for the Cambridge Northern Bypass might take land that would be needed for this new line, and therefore plans for this road should be reviewed to ensure that land provision remains for a future rail link

¹⁸ Central Section Options, East West Rail Consortium, <http://eastwestrail.org.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/East-West-Rail-Central-Section.pdf>

¹⁹ <http://www.eera.gov.uk/publications-and-resources/studies/transport-studies/multi-modal-studies/london-to-south-midlands-multi-modal-study/>

²⁰ A14 Challenge submission by Cambridgeshire Campaign for Better Transport

²¹ Hansard HC Deb, 15 November 2011, c214WH

- The route could also be used by passengers to link to new high speed services heading north or south, further increasing the competitiveness of rail compared with road into and out of the region around the A14

Timing	2019-
Cost estimate:	Unknown

New express bus services integrated with north–south rail links

Facilities and funding should be provided for the introduction of new express bus services between Cambridge and Rugby to provide easy access to longer-distance rail services on three separate main lines and help divert long-distance commuter traffic from using the A14.

With high-quality, reliable buses connecting seamlessly with trains, many commuters will be encouraged to move away from cars. In addition, access to jobs further afield will be provided for the East of England’s 16% of households with no car, and to many individuals in the region’s 45% of one-car households.

New facilities for these services would need to be built, and the cost of these could be covered by Regional Growth Fund or other funding from central government, for example via the successor to the DfT’s Local Major Schemes process. The services would be likely to be commercially viable (although they might require some ‘kick-start’ funding at first) and could be provided in partnership between a bus operator, the County Council and relevant rail operators.

The key features of an effective express bus service provided on this model would be:

- It would connect with trains at Cambridge, Huntingdon, Kettering and Rugby. This means not only that it would serve the stations directly but (unless services are very frequent) timings would be coordinated
- To help with these ‘seamless’ journeys, more long distance trains on the East Coast Main Line, Midland Main Line and West Coast Main Line would need to stop at the relevant stations
- Through and interavailable tickets would be available, as if the whole route was served by train.
- The buses would serve all the relevant town and city centres, including Thrapston and Spaldwick, to link up with conventional or demand-responsive buses serving nearby rural villages
- In the long term, the A14 express buses would also interchange at the A14/M1/M6 junction with long-distance coaches. Note that this is not possible with the present layout of the junction as there is no way in which coaches can join or leave the M1 towards the south
- The buses would stop at other locations, and be able to do so without leaving the A14, to avoid undue time penalties. The facilities provided would be high quality – in essence a set of "virtual train stations", which would have real time info, a waiting area away from the main road, a bridge or underpass so that both sides of the road could be served (note that these bridges would also help reduce the severance experienced by communities along the A14 at these locations) and cycle parking. More details of potential station sites are given in the separate submission to this challenge by Cambridgeshire Campaign for Better Transport

Timing	2015-
Cost estimate:	
New high quality stops and virtual stations:	£50m
Services:	Commercially viable
A14/M1/M6 interchange:	Unknown

Summary of costs

The estimated total cost between 2012 and 2019 of the measures described above is £454m.

For this amount of investment (from a range of sources set out in the next section) an initial package of 14 measures likely to make a very substantial difference to the problems of the A14 corridor, would be:

- Demand management measures across Cambridgeshire, including workplace travel plans that would encourage car-sharing, transport information and smart tickets usable on any service
- Improved local bus services
- More services along the guided busway, including quicker and more frequent services between Huntingdon and Cambridge
- New and expanded park-and-ride facilities
- Better spatial plans and strategies to reduce the need to travel
- Workplace parking controls (note that this measure would raise revenue)
- Improvements to the Felixstowe–Nuneaton rail line to remove HGV traffic
- Active Traffic Management on this final stretch of A14 to reduce the speed limit at peak times, smooth traffic and help prevent collisions
- Work to improve diversion road routes when the A14 suffers a major incident
- Further improvements to the A14 to reduce collisions and community severance
- Wider use of 3D scanners to reduce police time dealing with incidents on the A14
- More work on ensuring HGVs are compliant with safety rules
- Facilities for new express bus services along the A14 for longer journeys, linked up with mainline rail timetables

The longer-term projects proposed in this document are mainly uncosted as they are more exploratory and would require further work on the options available. However, it is important to note that many of the proposed measures, such as new rail lines, would bring in revenue streams once enabled by infrastructure investment.

We believe that, even if every measure in this proposal was funded, it would still add up to far less public investment than the original proposals to widen just one stretch of the A14.

5. How could your suggested solution be financed? Would any part of your proposal raise money to pay for itself in the long run?

As shown above, the total cost of implementing all the measures proposed in the package outlined above is likely to be around £450m.

However, several of the measures involve new or upgraded public transport services or facilities, which are likely to be commercially viable to run without subsidy, or would bring in ongoing revenue streams that could be used to draw in private finance support for any capital costs – for example from the process of targeting investment from UK pension funds that was begun by the Autumn Statement 2011.

Other capital projects such as the ‘virtual stations’ for express buses and new sections of busway could be funded via public processes such as the Regional Growth Fund (run by BIS), the local major scheme successor process (run by DfT) or by private finance.

Campaign for Better Transport has looked in detail at private finance options for rail station development, which could be used as a model for parts of the express bus infrastructure. With law firm Norton Rose, we

organised a conference in London in June 2011, which looked at these opportunities, and presentations from this conference can be downloaded here: <http://www.nortonrose.com/invitations/2011/the-future-of-station-development-50520.aspx>

Cambridgeshire County Council has also not yet succeeded in its applications to the Local Sustainable Transport Fund, but a version of its proposals for demand management ('Travel for Cambridgeshire') may be successful in the next round and could be enhanced with additional money from a Workplace Parking Levy to develop and create an effective package aimed more directly at removing cars from the A14.

A notable omission from the current 'Travel for Cambridgeshire' proposals is smart ticketing, which is also a priority for Government. Cambridgeshire County Council, DfT, bus and rail operators, and local authorities should work together to deliver an integrated smart ticketing offer for the area.

The growth in patronage on public transport should deliver the finance to pay for this, but initial start-up costs may need to be covered by external funding or borrowing. However, it could be specified for rail within the new franchises for the routes in the area that will be let in the next few years. The experience of Oyster on National Rail in London has seen patronage on rail routes increase with additional trips generated by Oyster estimated to account for an additional 5.5% trips on National Rail as a direct result, generating an additional £50m in revenue.²²

Rail reinstatement could be funded through the normal Network Rail processes, wholly or partly from developer contributions along the route, directly through new local major transport scheme funding mechanisms, or a combination of these. A good example of developer involvement in new rail infrastructure is the reinstatement of the Bere Alston–Tavistock line in Devon.²³

3. Which bodies and people are essential delivery partners? What will each of their roles be in delivering your solution?

AND

6. What steps are needed to deliver your proposals, and how long might these take? E.g. design, construction, changes to rules or policies.

These numerous and varied proposals seek to involve a wide range of partners in devising, planning, funding and delivering them.

These are very briefly suggested below, mainly in respect of funding and delivery. At the origination and planning stage, it will also be important to consult local people about changes and projects that would affect them, and also to research the market for commercial proposals.

A. Reducing the number of cars using the A14 for local commuting

- Widespread demand management and 'Smarter Choices' – workplaces, business organisations, local authorities, programme contractors, transport operators, developers
- Improving local bus services – local authorities, bus operators
- Park-and-ride at Brampton Racecourse – racecourse owners, local authorities, bus operators
- Non-transport interventions aimed at reducing the need to travel – local authorities, healthcare, education and other public service bodies
- Workplace Parking Levy – Cambridgeshire County Council, other local authorities, major employers

²² Oyster on National Rail Update, Transport for London, February 2011, <http://www.tfl.gov.uk/assets/downloads/corporate/Item08-Oyster-NR.pdf>

²³ See: http://www.kilbridegroup.com/docs/view_news.asp?nid=51

B. Taking long-distance freight traffic away from the A14 and onto rail

- Stage 2 of the Felixstowe–Nuneaton upgrade – Network Rail, port authorities, rail haulage companies, passenger operators, local authorities
- Further investigation of north–south rail routes to the east of London – Department for Transport, Transport for London, Network Rail, local authorities

C. Improving traffic-management, safety and resilience on the current A14

- Continue with repairs of the Huntingdon railway viaduct – Highways Agency
- Reassess and improve the A428–A421 link – Highways Agency, local authorities
- Small-scale modifications on the A14 to improve safety – Highways Agency
- Wider use of 3D scanners to reduce police time dealing with incidents – Department for Transport, police authorities
- ITS, ATM and review of HGV safety measures – Highways Agency, port authorities, Department for Transport, Vehicle and Operator Services Agency, police authorities

D. Provide public transport alternatives for longer distance car journeys within the A14 corridor

- Continued extension of the Cambridgeshire Guided Busway services – local councils, bus operators, developers
- Improved east–west passenger rail links – Network Rail, local councils, private consortium, Department for Transport (initial study)
- New express bus services between Cambridge and Rugby – local authorities, bus and coach operators, rail operators, Highways Agency, developers and parish councils in relevant locations

January 2012

Sian Berry
Campaign for Better Transport

Campaign for Better Transport's vision is a country where communities have affordable transport that improves quality of life and protects the environment. Achieving our vision requires substantial changes to UK transport policy which we aim to achieve by providing well-researched, practical solutions that gain support from both decision-makers and the public.

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