

From:- Councillor Jill Tuck
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The Rt Hon Philip Hammond MP
Secretary of State for Transport
Great Minster House
Department for Transport
76 Marsham Street
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11 November 2010

Dear Secretary of State,

A14 Improvements

We write in the light of the dismay that many have felt since the recent announcement of the cancellation of the proposed A14 Ellington to Fen Ditton Scheme and to seek urgent action to explore an alternative scheme to solve the acute problems.

The CHUMMS study made it clear that a multi modal solution is needed for this transport corridor; Guided Busway, rail improvements on the Felixstowe to Nuneaton route and improvements to the A14. The first two of these are well underway and of course efforts to increase the share of movement by public transport and on rail must continue. But the road is the missing piece.

The A14 provides an essential corridor for both people and freight and links the east coast ports with the Midlands and the North. The Ellington to Girton section is of particular importance. In addition to its east-west function, it also links the North and Midlands with Stansted and London and a wide range of destinations in the South East. As such, it serves a vital local, regional, national and indeed international function.

Whilst we fully appreciate the financial pressures facing the country, the need for deficit reduction, and the difficulties of accommodating such a large scheme in the programme, the cancellation of the A14 improvements puts at risk the very issues that we are all trying to promote – sustainable economic growth and development. It is intrinsically linked to the delivery of the major new development at Northstowe which is a key element of the plans of this area to realise its economic potential. All of the key stakeholders, public and private sector, are clear that something must be done to overcome the problems.



Given the cancellation of the existing scheme, we welcome the announcement that there is funding for work to identify cost effective solutions to the problems on the A14. However, we are most concerned to ensure that this happens quickly and identifies a clear and deliverable way forward.

In particular, we are concerned at the suggestion of a further large scale multi modal study. As mentioned above, much information already exists from the CHUMMS study. The most pressing priority is on the Ellington to Girton section where the problem is essentially one of insufficient road capacity and it is unlikely that even significant success in modal shift would address this.

To move this forward, we request an early meeting of key representatives from this area with officials from your department and the Highways Agency. Following that, we suggest the creation of a joint task force, commissioned and overseen by Mike Penning MP, Minister for Strategic Transport, to develop an action plan. This should address the points you made in your recent statement around developing a credible and affordable alternative to the previous A14 scheme, addressing the specific problem of the Huntingdon Viaduct and looking at the extent to which private money could assist. We are clear that a key objective for the task force must be to preserve as much as possible of the design and legal processes of the original scheme to facilitate quick progress.

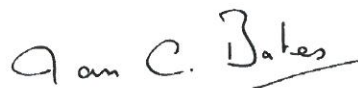
Immediate action is needed to address the pressing problems of safety and delay on the A14, and separately to ensure that some of the major development sites around Cambridge that already have planning permission can go ahead.

In closing, we would like to emphasise that the status quo is unacceptable for all of us, locally, regionally, nationally. Something must be done and soon. For safety reasons, for economic growth, for housing growth, we urge that you respond positively and quickly to what we believe are constructive proposals in this letter and, by setting up a Ministerially commissioned A14 task force, we can collectively put our shoulders to the wheel, business, local and central government; to address one of the most pressing transport problems facing the country.

Yours sincerely



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Leader of Cambridgeshire County
Council



Cllr Ian Bates
Leader of Huntingdonshire District
Council



John Bridge, OBE
Chief Executive, Cambridgeshire
Chambers of Commerce



Cllr Fred Brown
Leader of East Cambridgeshire District
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Tony Ciaburro
Corporate Director: Environment,
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Northamptonshire County Council



George Kieffer
Chairman of Haven Gateway



Cllr Ray Manning
Leader of South Cambridgeshire
District Council



Cllr Alan Melton
Leader of Fenland District
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Cllr Sian Reid
Leader of Cambridge City Council



Sir David Trippier
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