

**CAMBRIDGESHIRE HORIZONS BOARD MEETING
12 December 2007**

A14 Huntingdon-Cambridge

An update provided by the Highways Agency

1.0 Ongoing Operational activities

1.1 Installation of Average Speed Cameras (sometimes referred to as SPECS):

Works have been substantially completed on the cameras and are now operational with the police commencing enforcement on 7th July 2007. Highways Agency has received positive comments about the effect of these cameras in terms of controlling vehicles speeds, increasing headways between vehicles and generally having a positive effect on driver behaviour. The first “after” speed survey was undertaken in October and analysis of the results are underway. Accident data will be monitored but at present we only have data available up to September and it is too early to draw any conclusions. The Police will publish data on the number of prosecutions at the end of the financial year and we will publish details of the effect on accidents and other incidents at that time.

However anecdotal evidence suggests the following:- a significant improvement headways (ie distance between vehicles), less variability in vehicle speeds; and a reduction in the number of collisions.

The publicity campaign to support the introduction of the cameras, led by Cambridgeshire County Council’s Road Safety Team, has been well received.

1.2 Parking in Lay-bys

A study in 2006/7 showed that about 15% of all injury accidents on the A14 in Cambridgeshire have some relationship with lay-bys – either the presence of the lay-by itself or vehicles moving in or out of the lay-by. The Agency has consulted on a permanent traffic regulation order to prohibit parking in sub-standard lay-bys, except in an emergency and the total closure of one lay-by. No objections to these proposals have been received and the associated works are programmed to be undertaken in early 2008.

So far, the closure of the Alconbury Truckstop has not resulted in any noticeable problems on the trunk road. We are continuing to liaise with the County Council and other local bodies about any other impacts, but none have been brought to the Agency’s attention.

2.0 The Major Scheme (Widening between Ellington-Fen Ditton)

- 2.1 The announcement of the preferred route for the western section of the scheme was made on 24 October, completing this process for the whole of the project length. Commitment of funding to take the scheme through the next phase of development to draft Order publication has also been approved.
- 2.2 The procurement process is continuing and we hope to appoint a contractor to take the scheme forward early in the New Year
- 2.3 In the meantime essential survey work which is required to take the scheme forward is being carried out by HA where possible in order to avoid any delay to scheme progress.
- 2.4 The intention remains to complete the overall scheme programme by 2015 (subject to the outcome of the statutory process and continued availability of finance).

3.0 Northstowe

- 3.1. It was agreed that the Northstowe development should seek to achieve a high level of transport sustainability in order to minimise the number of vehicle trips that would be generated. Northstowe developers are committed to this objective; work has continued over recent months to ensure that the balance of land uses that will be promoted at Northstowe is such that it maximises the number of trips that would be contained within the new town - thereby reducing the number of external vehicle movements that would be generated. A comprehensive package of Travel Planning measures is being established and a Draft Travel Plan has been produced and commented upon by the Highways Agency and Cambridgeshire County Council. The developers are now working to incorporate these comments into the Plan.

Proposed mitigation measures

- 3.2. Existing conditions on A14 (safety and/or congestion) are well understood and the resultant level of service is often poor. Taken at face value, there is no spare capacity with which to allow Northstowe to commence prior to the Widening scheme being in place. To countermand this, the developer and public sector partners have been working to identify interim mitigation measures which, if delivered, could allow a start of the development.
- 3.3. The modelling indicates that one of the key elements of a package of measures is the implementation of a link road that would run parallel to the A14 between the Bar Hill and Dry Drayton interchanges. This new highway for local traffic would split local/long distance movements and hence create additional 'capacity' along the A14 corridor in the vicinity of Northstowe. The feasibility and priority of this measure and others being considered were discussed at a workshop on 29th November. Final decisions upon the suitability of the measures will be able to be taken when the outputs from the modelling are finalised (see below).

- 3.4. As part of this package the Highways Agency is keen to see not only physical highway measures and travel plan measures but also 'Access Control' to the A14 and its junctions. This type of control will be investigated once the modelling identifies the residual traffic generated by the development. (ie after taking account of agreed mitigation measures).

Traffic Modelling/Planning Scenarios (to test the effects of Northstowe development)

- 3.5. The developer has now begun fresh modelling work and the Highways Agency is working with the developer to resolve outstanding issues.
- 3.6. It was expected that by this time there would be some outputs from the modelling available which would give some indication of the residual traffic in the peak periods and allow work on finalising the agreement of the Interim Measures to begin. However, the developer's consultants have not yet managed to provide robust modelling outputs.

Construction Traffic

- 3.7. No agreement has yet been reached between the Highways Agency and the developer as to how construction traffic will access the Northstowe site before the building of the A14 scheme. The Highways Agency's position is that with the existing conditions on the A14, Northstowe construction traffic cannot use the A14 between 7am and 7pm. The local authorities position is that Northstowe construction traffic cannot use the local road network either. The developer is developing a proposal to allow the construction traffic to use the A14 between the morning and evening peak periods. The workshop held on 29th November provided the opportunity for all stakeholders to discuss this issue and further meetings are planned to explore a solution acceptable to all stakeholders.

Summary

- 3.7. Work to complete the traffic modelling and assessment, and on defining a potential package of interim measures is ongoing (travel plan, engineering, levels of service and access control). Work to agree a solution to the Interim access for construction traffic is also ongoing. The developers have stated that they now expect a new planning application for Northstowe to be submitted in mid December 2007. It now seems unlikely that agreement with the Highways Agency on this new planning application will be reached before the submission date because the work on modelling, interim measures and construction traffic access, will not be substantially completed by that time. Discussions to resolve these issues will continue after the submission, with a view to agreement by the time the application is ready for determination.

Gwyn Drake, Highways Agency

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