

CAMBRIDGESHIRE HORIZONS

Agenda Item No:7

A14 update

To: **Joint Strategic Growth Implementation Committee**

Date: **16 February 2010**

From: **Director of Growth and Infrastructure, Cambridgeshire
County Council**

Purpose: **To provide a brief update for members on the current
position with the A14 scheme**

Recommendation: **The Committee is invited to note the current position with
the A14 improvement scheme.**

Contact:	Name: Job Title: E-mail address: Telephone No.	Graham Hughes Director of Growth and Infrastructure Graham.Hughes@cambridgeshire.gov.uk 01223 715664
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1. Background

- 1.1 The A14 improvement scheme was withdrawn as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review package of public spending reductions. The improvement scheme that had been in preparation for a number of years, had reached the point where draft Orders had been issued and a public inquiry was scheduled for mid to late 2010.
- 1.2 The A14 is in need of improvement for a variety of reasons including delivery of a number of key developments such as the North West of Cambridge and Northstowe, the environmental conditions in Huntingdon and the persistent congestion and safety problems.
- 1.3 In withdrawing the improvement scheme, the Government made it clear that it accepted there are problems on the route that need to be addressed but at £1.2bn, the scheme was simply unaffordable. The government also indicated that it looked to local partners to assess how best to move the situation forward and that it would cooperate in any work undertaken.
- 1.4 In response, a letter, attached here as Appendix 1 was sent to the Secretary of State for Transport, the Right Honourable Philip Hammond MP, signed by a range of local stakeholders and seeking the creation of a task and finish group to look at alternatives to the previous scheme. An initial letter response was received in January (but dated December) promising a fuller response to the proposals in time.

2. Current position

- 2.1 A formal Ministerial response to letter is expected shortly. Following discussions with DfT officials, initial work has started between the County Council and Horizons to scope out in draft the details of a task and finish group and how the governance of the project could work. It is suggested that this will take the form of a high level Steering Group and a more detailed Project group. Although the initial letter from the government indicated that this new process would be substantially locally led, it is now understood that DfT will be playing a leading role which is helpful given that any final funding for a solution would need to be agreed through the normal channels. It is expected that the Highways Agency and Network Rail will also play a key part in the work.
- 2.2 The Government has indicated that it is looking for a conclusion to the study by mid 2012. Once the structure for the group is agreed, it will be necessary to agree the detailed outputs from the process and timelines. It is hoped that the first meetings of the groups can be arranged shortly.
- 2.3 An update of the current position will be provided orally at the meeting.