



Transport & Infrastructure Committee	Agenda Item
13 March 2024	9

Title:	A141 – update on progress and engagement
Report of:	Matthew Lutz, Transport Programme Manager
Lead Member:	Cllr Anna Smith, Lead Member for Transport
Public Report:	Yes
Key Decision:	No
Voting Arrangements:	N/A

Recommendations:	
A	Note the update on A141 project progress and delivery including future engagement.

Strategic Objective(s):	
The proposals within this report fit under the following strategic objective(s):	
x	<p>Achieving good growth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further development of long-term strategies that integrate our local transport and highway connectivity priorities.
x	<p>Increased connectivity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digital and physical connection to communities, professional networks, health services, leisure, nature and to places of employment and education. Reducing the need for travel with more services located within communities. Deliverables: - Reduced rural isolation - Improved Highway connectivity - Sustainable and reliable public transport. Outcomes - (1) Reduction in numbers of people killed or seriously injured on region’s roads (2) Reduced congestion on major roads (3) Measurable improvements in connectivity for ‘left behind’ areas
x	<p>Enabling resilient communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing the infrastructure and support to enable communities across the region to be adaptable to environmental and climate, financial and social crises and be well placed to extend cultural opportunities for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to be a great place to live and work. Have the transport infrastructure needed to achieve sustainable growth Reduced accidents on region’s roads. Deliverables: Environmental and Climate actions - Infrastructure – sufficiency, preservation, and safety.

1. Purpose	
1.1	This paper provides an update on the progress of the A141 project to date and the next steps to the follow on in terms of strategic work and stakeholder engagement.

2. Proposal

- 2.1 The proposal is an outline of the project to date and to ask Transport and Infrastructure Committee members to note and provide comment on progress and plans.

3. Background

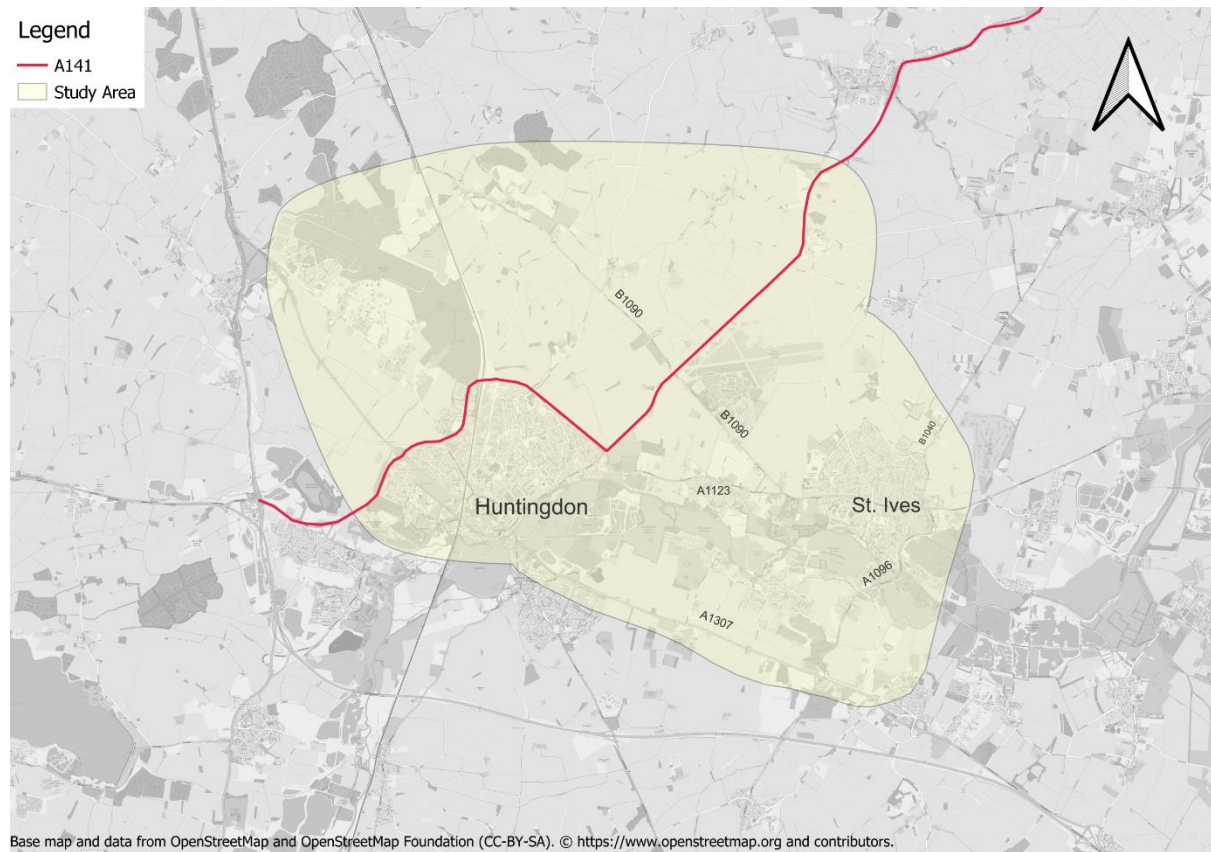
- 3.1 The A141 and St Ives Improvements Study considers the upgrading of the transport network on the A141 corridor and around Huntingdon and St Ives. Through this improvement scheme, we aim to support local and long-distance travel.

This aligns with the Combined Authority's Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP) and Huntingdonshire District Council's (HDC) Local Plan, which states that *"our A141 and St Ives Improvements project is currently being prioritised and worked on to reduce congestion and improve reliability across the study area to facilitate sustainable growth, improve the public realm, as well as improving connectivity through active travel modes, walking, and cycling. In addition, improvements to bus service provision and interchange will be taken in consideration."*

- 3.2 Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) is responsible for delivering the scheme up to the production of an Outline Business Case (OBC). The Combined Authority is the project sponsor and final scheme decisions are made through this committee.

- 3.3 The A141 is crucial for the whole Huntingdon and St Ives area. The A141 is the main road between the Fens and Huntingdon, connecting the Fens with the A14 westwards and the A1 north and southwards. The A141 connects Fenland towns and villages such as Chatteris with Huntingdon and with much of the rest of the country (via the A14 to the Midlands and the A1 south to Herts/Beds and London).

The St Ives transport network is important for the market town of St Ives and its surrounding villages. It also has strategic importance to the wider region and its future growth. Through St Ives, the A1123 is the key east-west link. To the west, it connects St Ives with Huntingdon and RAF Wyton via the B1090 and the A141 corridor which joins the A14 and A1 strategic road networks. To the east, the A1123 links to Earith and local quarries. To the south of St Ives, the A1096 (Harrison Way/London Road) also connects to the A14 via the A1307.



3.4	<p>Some of the challenges faced by the existing A141 and St Ives road network include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peak hours congestion; • Unreliable journey times; • Rat-running through villages; • Road safety issues and risk of accidents; • Lack of active travel options; • Noise and air quality issues due to congestion; • Lack of safe, off-road walking and cycle routes; and • Lack of good public transport. <p>At an early stage of public consultation in 2021, respondents were asked to rank the top five issues that concerned them most. These were congestion, heavy traffic, and road safety. A smaller but still numerically significant group were concerned about air quality and journey times.</p>
3.5	<p><u>Progress to date</u></p> <p>The A141 and St Ives transport schemes started as parallel improvement proposals. Building on feedback early in the process, during 2021 we explored a variety of options for the improvement of both the A141 and the St Ives network.</p> <p>Two public engagement surveys have been undertaken on the options for the A141 and St Ives network, respectively. The A141 'Have Your Say' engagement survey was conducted from 22 February 2021 to 15 March 2021. The St Ives 'Have Your Say' survey was conducted from 14 June 2021 to 5 July 2021.</p> <p>Both the surveys were open for everyone to respond. Responses were received online and by post due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The aim of these initial surveys was to understand public views on key issues and opportunities in the study area. The surveys also presented some high-level option packages to understand the public's views on the preferred best option.</p>
3.6	<p>The A141 survey showed that respondents felt most strongly about issues relating to the volume and speed of HGVs, air quality and noise issues, congestion, road safety and vehicle speeds.</p> <p>Respondents to the St Ives survey felt most strongly about issues relating to congestion, active travel, and the resulting environmental impacts.</p> <p>In both surveys, most respondents agreed on the need to reduce road traffic and encourage more active travel options (such as walking and cycling). In terms of preferred options, there was most support for a combination of bypass options and sustainable travel options.</p>
3.7	<p>In November 2021, after considering the consultation reports for the two separate schemes, the Combined Authority agreed to merge them into one joint scheme because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The A141 corridor & St Ives network are interlinked traffic conditions on either network can influence the volume and flow of traffic travelling through the neighbouring network; • The study areas are close to each other; and • The study areas face similar challenges. <p>An Options Appraisal Report (OAR) and Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) have been produced that explains why the project should be taken forward and the initial preferred options. They showed how the projects relate to other schemes in the wider area.</p>
3.8	<p>Since the previous project stage was completed, there have been some key policy changes at local, regional, and national level, such as greater focus on decarbonisation and climate change risks. The option packages need to reflect these changes to demonstrate the shift towards sustainable growth, including in the transport sector. As a result, CCC (operating on the Combined Authority's behalf) and their principal consultants Atkins, have been revisiting the work done at previous stages, assessing our assumptions, and refining the options in the context of sustainable and active travel considerations.</p>
3.9	<p>In working through the revalidation of the original SOBC against the change in national and local policy, it became apparent that further work was needed to assess the merit of both strategic passenger transport initiatives and a further option to examine a limited road-based intervention working together, with passenger transport and active travel initiatives.</p>

	<p>This has resulted in additional transport modelling being required to be able to correctly assess the effectiveness of each option. This has resulted in a time extension to the programme as well as a reprofiling of expenditure. While the SOBC refresh is being finalised, further work is required to provide support data to enable refining the new shortlist of options.</p> <p>CCC's principal consultant, Atkins, have provided an update that because of the above, they have updated the programme for a full business case to the completion date in early 2025. Programme Risk Reduction meetings are taking place and discussions are underway around how further extensions can be reduced.</p> <p>In the meantime, Atkins are still progressing the work to revalidate the SOBC following policy changes. In addition to the three Bypass solutions, Atkins are developing a strategic public transport solution and a hybrid solution. Active travel will form a fundamental and integral component of the final solution.</p> <p>Atkins are presenting their technical analysis and reporting outcome from the revalidation exercise on their original SOBC submission at a future Project Board (March/April 2024). An update on this will need to be brought to TIC for consideration of options and a timeline of next steps.</p>
3.10	<p>CCC have a A141 Member Working Group (MWG) sat for the first time on 21 Feb, with the Combined Authority and HDC also present. There is currently work going on with CPCA and the County to agree appropriate governance and communication to reflect the sponsor and funder role of the CPCA.</p> <p>There is considerable interest in the scheme progress from HDC members. Following the meeting of the MWG in February it was agreed that a wider update of HDC members was necessary. As a direct consequence, the Combined Authority and HDC agreed to set up a briefing session for HDC members as soon as possible. This is due to take place in late March.</p> <p>We will return to the Transport and Infrastructure Committee in June with an update and also a full stakeholder engagement plan leading up to and including consultation, which should take place later in 2024.</p>

4. Appendices

4.1 None.

5. Implications

Financial Implications

5.1 The Budget for the A141 and At Ives is as follows;

	£000		
2023/24	7,001	Approved	
2024/25	1,500	Subject to Approval	
2025/26	1,500	Subject to Approval	

Legal Implications

5.2 There are no significant legal implications at this stage.

Public Health Implications

5.3 One of the primary goals of the A141 project is to improve public health through the implementation of schemes that emphasise accessibility, sustainability, and community welfare. This will be delivered through improvements to active travel environment to encourage their use and enhancements to the urban environs.

Environmental & Climate Change Implications

5.4 The A141 project will generate environmental improvements by strategically investing in a range of initiatives geared towards sustainability promotion, carbon emissions reduction, and bolstering urban resilience.

Other Significant Implications	
5.5	None.
Background Papers	
5.6	None.