



Report title: A141 Huntingdon Strategic Outline Business Case

To: Transport and Infrastructure Committee

Meeting Date: Wednesday 9 June 2021

Public report: Public Report

Lead Member: Mayor Dr Nik Johnson

From: Paul Raynes
Director of Delivery & Strategy

Key decision: Not applicable

Forward Plan ref: Not applicable

Recommendations: The Combined Authority Board is recommended to:

Note and comment on this update on progress with the Strategic Outline Business Case and the outcome of public engagement.

Voting arrangements: Note only no vote required.

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To report on the progress of the Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) for the A141.

2. Background

- 2.1 In April 2018, the A141 Huntingdon Capacity Study (commissioned by Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority) and the St Ives Area Transport Study (commissioned by Cambridgeshire County Council) commenced as a joint delivery study to consider the capacity challenges in the area.
- 2.2. In March 2019, the Combined Authority subsequently approved the commissioning of a Huntingdon Third River Crossing feasibility study to also consider how that proposal might address the capacity challenges in the area.
- 2.3. Emerging findings from the A141 Huntingdon Capacity Study and St Ives Area Transport Study suggested that they needed to take into account the wider growth issues in the Huntingdon and St Ives area. It was therefore agreed by the January 2020 Transport and Infrastructure Committee and Combined Authority Board that this work be extended to include the Huntingdon Third River Crossing work.
- 2.4. The change to the study scope meant that it was necessary to compare the performance of the wider road network as a result of both schemes. The proposal for a Huntingdon Third River Crossing was therefore included within the traffic modelling and a high-level environmental desktop study for the area. The options compared included a bypass route for the A141 North of Huntingdon as well as the river crossing.
- 2.5 The outcomes of the study were reported at the August 2020 Combined Authority Board. Evidence demonstrated that an A141 bypass was the better performing option for addressing current and future congestion and growth and the Board decided to commission a Strategic Outline Business Case for that option. Atkins were subsequently engaged through a procurement exercise to undertake a Strategic Outline Business Case for that option.
- 2.6 The key aims of the SOBC are:
 - To reduce spatial inequalities across Cambridgeshire and share the success of the Greater Cambridge area;
 - To ensure that the planned employment and housing growth in the Huntingdon and St Ives area can be accommodated;
 - To address current congestion and delay, reduce journey times and improve reliability, and on local routes impacted by the traffic and congestion on the existing A141;
 - To form part of a co-ordinated package of investment in this area which will cater for increased capacity for all modes of transport;
 - To embed a safe systems approach into all transport operations to achieve Vision Zero; and
 - To contribute to the reduction of carbon emissions to net zero by 2050 to minimise the impact of transport and travel on climate change.

3.0 The Strategic Outline Business Case

- 3.1 Building upon the previous study work, an Existing Conditions Report has been prepared. The report presents the existing conditions for the A141 area. The report notes that Huntingdon has strong economic connections to Peterborough, London and Cambridge, as well as the market towns nearby. The car is the most dominant mode for commuting trips to and from Huntingdon, with the exception of trips to London. The A141 is a strategic route connecting the A47 in north Cambridgeshire with the A14 and the rest of England. At a local level, the A141 is a distributor road that follows the northern perimeter of Huntingdon from west to east, whilst also connecting areas around Huntingdon.
- 3.2 The report highlights that the A141 is a busy route, which experiences delay, particularly eastbound in the PM Peak. The busiest junction in the study area is Spittals Interchange, though this is likely to be significantly impacted by the A14 Improvement Scheme. The remaining junctions are also congested, in particular the A141 / B1514 / A1123 BP Roundabout junction. There is good regional public transport (bus and rail) connections from Huntingdon town centre and good local connections via bus, however these run along radial routes to/from the town centre as opposed to orbital routes using the A141. In terms of active travel, the A141 has limited provision for public transport, limited pedestrian crossing facilities and very limited cycle provision. The report demonstrates a number of environmental constraints within and around Huntingdon which need to be considered within future assessments, most of which are situated around Great Stukeley including the railway and a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).
- 3.3 There are four significant development sites allocated within the HDC Local Plan to 2036 located along or around the A141 near Huntingdon. The report documents the case for change for the A141 with the road currently experiencing high levels of delay and congestion with an increase forecast in the future due to the significant development proposed in Huntingdonshire by 2036. The A141 has a significant role to play in delivering growth in both housing and economy with recent reports identifying that this scheme will be needed to unlock further growth beyond the Local Plan.
- 3.4 An Appraisal Specification Report has been written, this report provides the context for the appraisal to be undertaken and defines the scope, methodology and assumptions to be adopted in undertaking the modelling and appraisal. In summary, the report documents the proposed approach to the project and completing the SOBC.

Public engagement

- 3.5 Public and Stakeholder Engagement was undertaken between 22 February and 15 March. The engagement focused on current thoughts / opinions on the A141 as well as the initial options. In total, there were 464 responses to the online survey and two responses received by post.

3.6 The majority of respondents were residents of Huntingdon and the local area (33%). Other respondents had an interest in the road network due to Leisure Walking (19%) or Cycling (14%) or Commuter by car (17%). In terms of transport mode, the vast majority (64%) of trips undertaken by respondents in their local area were either by walking (32%) or car/van (as a driver) (32%). Overall, survey respondents felt most strongly about issues relating to HGVs, air quality, congestion, road safety and journey time issues as shown in Figure 1.

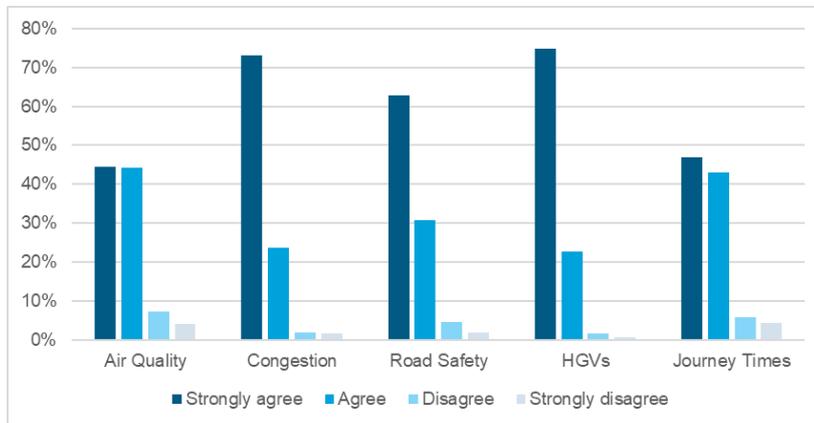


Figure 1 – Which issues around the A141 neighbourhood area you most concerned about?

3.7 In terms of what matters to the respondents in terms of future developments of their local transport network, the most common response was ‘very important’ to all areas surveyed particularly addressing congestion, safeguarding from rat-running and road safety as shown in figure 2.

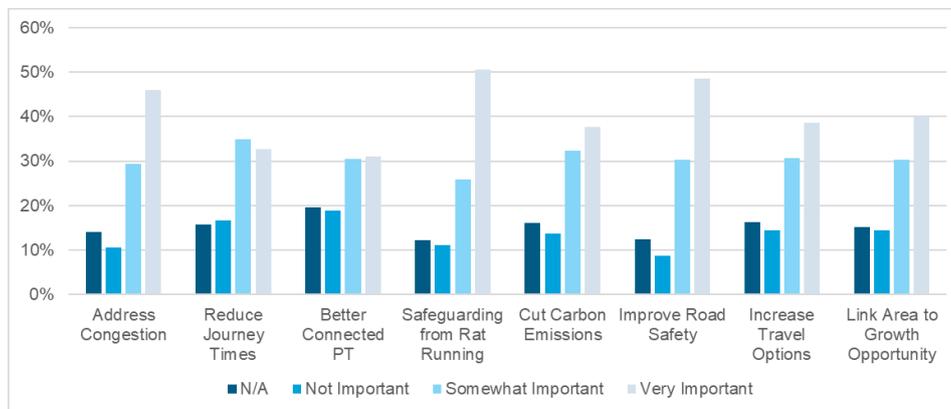


Figure 2 – What matters to you in future development of your local transport network?

3.8 Overall, most respondents were in agreement in the need to reduce road traffic. Respondents also agreed about reallocating road space to walking and cycling infrastructure. Fewer respondents felt that there was a need to reallocate road space to public transport as shown in Figure 3 and 4.

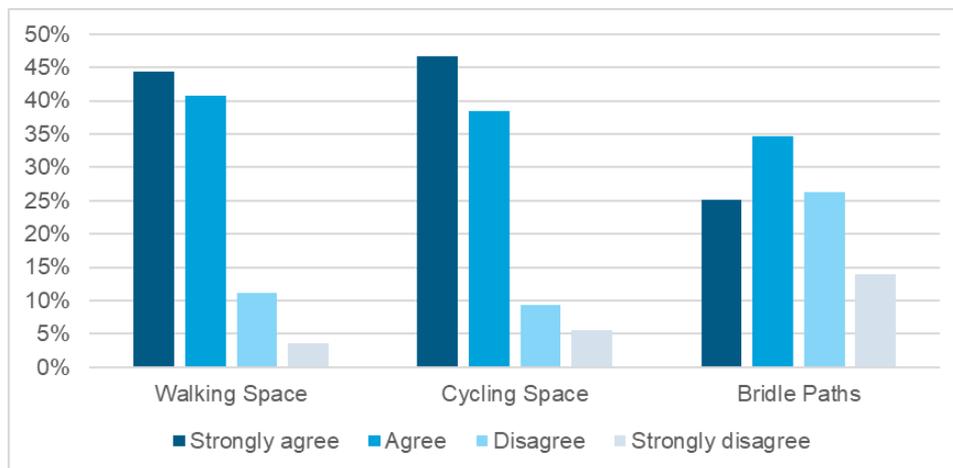


Figure 3 - To what extent do you agree there is a need to allocate road space for non- motorised users?

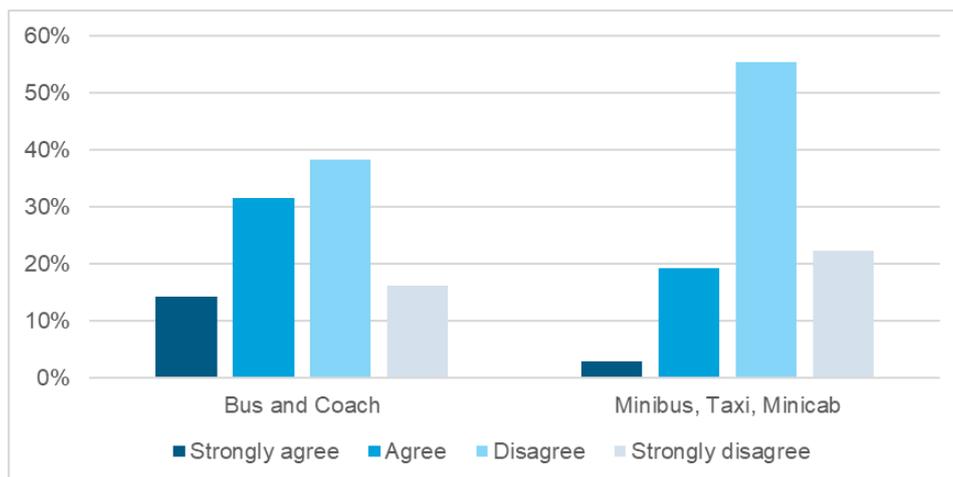


Figure 4 - To what extent do you agree that there is a need to allocate road space for dedicated public transport vehicles?

3.9 The proposed options for the study area included:

- Option 1: Full offline bypass with no connections - A new bypass from Spittals Interchange to Sawtry Way roundabout (B1090/A141), with no connections to existing roads or the new developments.
- Option 2: Full offline bypass with connections - A new bypass from Spittals Interchange to Sawtry Way roundabout (B1090/A141) including three junctions with the existing road network (Ermine St, Abbots Ripton Road and Kings Ripton Road).
- Option 3: Online / Offline option – A new bypass from Spittals Interchange to the Tesco roundabout, then widening of the existing A141 to the Hartford Roundabout.
- Option 4: Rural Travel Hubs – Small, flexible transport interchanges at key locations, allowing more people to access sustainable transport networks.

- Option 5: Public Transport and Active Travel – Public Transport enhancements and Non-motorised user options including infrastructure, crossing points and active travel connections.
- Option 6: Transport Network Management – Potential areas to implement measures to discourage car travel for example a Clean Air Zone (CAZ), environmental weight limits, Workplace Parking Levies and reduced parking availability and/or increased charges.

3.10 Overall, respondents most favoured a bypass option with other sustainable / active travel options. A combination of Option 2 (a bypass with junctions to the existing network) and Option 5 (sustainable travel and active travel measures) being the most favourable as shown in Figure 5.

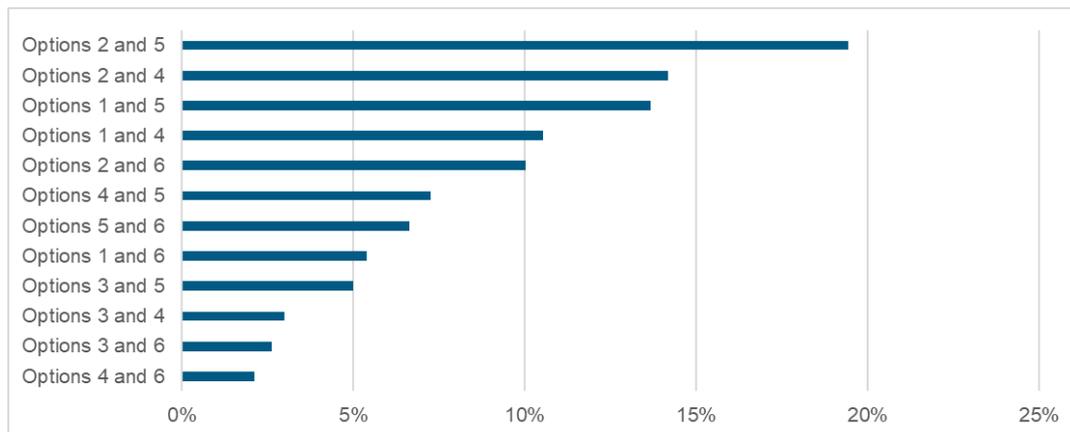


Figure 5 - Which combination of the options would you prefer to see considered further?

3.11 In summary the 'comment drop on a map' section of the engagement showed:

- In Huntingdon / A141 Huntingdon area, the most frequent comment was in relation to providing new or improved walking and cycling infrastructure.
- In the A141 north area, the most frequent comment was related to congestion and traffic management, as well as walking and cycling links.
- In the A1123 Houghton and Wyton area, and the area east / west of the railway line, the most frequent comment was the need for more walking, cycling and equestrian connections.
- In the North of the study area, comments focussed on traffic management measures and increase in road capacity.
- In St Ives (including North and East of St Ives) the most frequent comment was about traffic management measures as well comments suggesting a need to extend the scope of the A141 study.
- South / West of Huntingdon, the most frequent comments were about improving walking and cycling as well as suggesting other routes or transport improvements.

3.12 Two stakeholder meetings were also held during the public engagement period, one with Members and one with developers and their representatives. Stakeholders were then invited to comment on the options presented and encouraged to respond to the online engagement survey and submit responses to the project team. A number of written responses were received. The general responses to the engagement were consistent, in that they favoured a bypass option (1, 2 or 3) in conjunction with sustainable transport

measures (4, 5 and 6), particularly from new developments. One of the responses favoured widening of the existing A141 over a bypass. We will continue to work with stakeholders including HDC and CCC to ensure that their views are developed in in line with the project.

4. Next Steps

- 4.1 The Options Assessment Report and the Strategic Outline Business Case are programmed to be completed and submitted to the Combined Authority in October. They will then be reported to the Transport and Infrastructure Committee in November.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 There are no significant financial implications to report at this stage

6. Legal Implications

- 6.1 There are no direct legal implications at this stage.

7. Background Papers

- 7.1 January 2021 Combined Authority Board Paper

[CA Committee Paper January 2021](#)