



CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH COMBINED AUTHORITY BOARD	AGENDA ITEM No: 3.4
05 AUGUST 2020	PUBLIC REPORT

A141 HUNTINGDON CAPACITY STUDY AND THIRD RIVER CROSSING

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1. To summarise the outcome of the A141 and Huntingdon Third River Crossing study, and makes recommendations for next steps.

<u>DECISION REQUIRED</u>	
Lead Member:	Mayor James Palmer
Lead Officer:	Paul Raynes, Director of Delivery & Strategy
Forward Plan Ref: KD2020/056	Key Decision: Yes
The Combined Authority Board is recommended to: (a) Note the outcomes of the A141 and Huntingdon Third River Crossing Study (b) Approve the drawdown of budget of £350,000 for undertaking a Strategic Outline Business Case for the A141 (c) Approve the drawdown of budget of £500,000 from the Subject to Approval budget within the Medium-term Financial Plan for undertaking a Strategic Outline Business Case and further develop a package of Quick Wins	Voting arrangements Item (a) n/a Items (b) and (c) A vote in favour, by at least two-thirds of all Members (or their Substitute Members) appointed by the Constituent Councils to include the Members appointed by Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council, or their Substitute Members

2.0 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 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.

3.0 OUTCOMES OF THE STUDY

Strategic Assessment

- 3.1. The comparison of the Third River Crossing with the A141 bypass has shown that the A141 bypass offers greater benefits than a Third River Crossing, in particular, by supporting additional growth beyond that identified within the Huntingdon Local Plan. The most significant benefit of the A141 bypass over a Third River Crossing is that it addresses the capacity issues along the existing A141 route, where a number of significant Local Plan development sites are located. A Third River Crossing does not.
- 3.2. Sensitivity testing was undertaken to determine if a Third River Crossing, with junction capacity improvements along the existing A141, would address the capacity issues and support additional growth. The sensitivity test concluded that significant capacity issues would still remain along the A141, with many junctions being at, or over capacity. The test also demonstrated that any capacity improvement along the A141 would draw more trips away from a Third River Crossing, reducing the benefits from that scheme. This confirmed that an A141 bypass would be preferable.
- 3.3. A final test considering a Third River Crossing along with an A141 bypass was also undertaken to understand if delivering both options together could support additional growth over and above the Huntingdon Local Plan. This concluded that the combination of a Third River Crossing and the A141 bypass did not

provide any significant improvement beyond delivery of the A141 bypass alone, and network-wide junction capacity issues remained.

- 3.4. The strategic assessment for the A141 offline by-pass identified the potential to support an additional 6,750 dwellings in the region, 4,500 dwellings at Wyton Airfield and 2,250 at Land North of Huntingdon.
- 3.5. However, the assessment found that it was not possible to support additional growth to the east of St Ives, for example at Gifford's Park, due to wider network capacity issues, especially at the A1123 / B1040 / A1096 Junction and along the A1096 Harrison Way. Further investigation is therefore needed to identify a strategic intervention to deliver wider growth aspirations and bring significant improvement to St Ives.

Environmental Desktop Study

- 3.6. A high-level Environmental Assessment has been undertaken to identify the key issues associated with delivering a Third River Crossing between Huntingdon and St Ives. The assessment has also considered the broad area through which the A141 bypass, would pass, to enable a comparison of the environmental factors relating to the two options.
- 3.7. The assessment considered the following environmental factors:
 - Air Quality
 - Cultural Heritage
 - Ecology and Wildlife
 - Landscape
 - Noise
 - Water Environment.
- 3.8. **Figure 1** below, provides an overview plan showing the key environmental factors identified within the assessment, with the approximate area of a Third River Crossing and A141 bypass outlined in black.
- 3.9. The figure shows that the main environmental concerns identified immediately within the Third River Crossing and A141 bypass search areas which are Flood Risk and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). In addition flood risk is far more prevalent within the Third River Crossing area, and much of the land is situated within Flood Risk Zone 2 and 3, which would pose a significant challenge to the deliverability of a Third River Crossing within this area.
- 3.10. There are also a total of six SSSI's within the potential alignment area for a Third River Crossing which could potentially affect the alignment of a Third River Crossing. There is a single SSSI within the A141 bypass search area which runs north / south along the embankments of the East Coast Main Line. A bypass in this location would require a highway bridge over the railway line, which would take the road clear of the SSSI within the embankments, although mitigation would still be required.

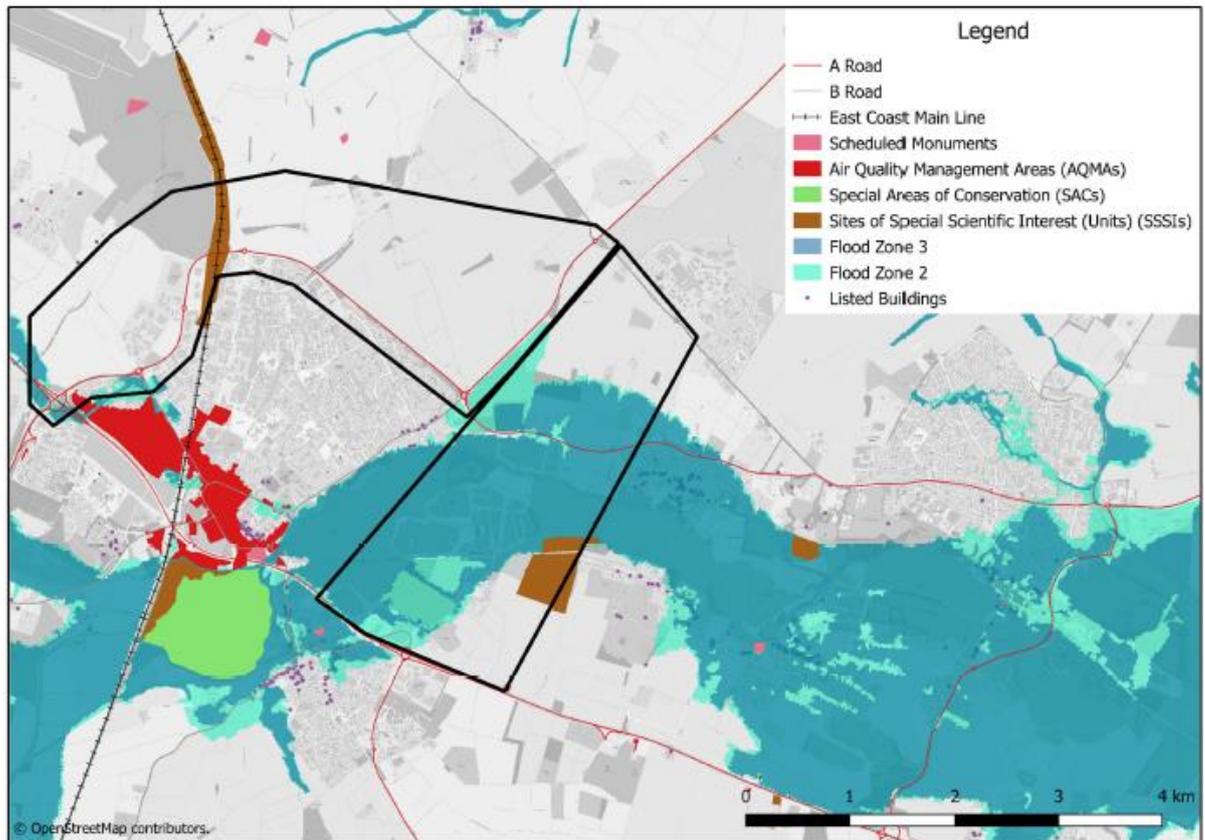


Figure 1: Overview Plan of Environmental Sensitive Locations

3.11. In conclusion, the evidence demonstrates that a A141 bypass is the better performing option for addressing current and future capacity issues and enabling growth, and has the least environmental impacts.

4.0 NEXT STEPS

4.1. The study provides the evidence for proceeding to develop a pair of Strategic Outline Business (SOBC) documents, one for the A141 bypass and one for capacity improvements at St Ives as well as a package of Quick Wins. The medium term financial plan (MTFP) provided a budget for further work to follow up on the A141 study which is adequate to fund these business cases.

4.2. Procurement will commence upon agreement by the Combined Authority Board. It is currently envisaged that it would require approximately seven to eight weeks to appoint suitable suppliers.

4.3. The expected programme to complete both the SOBC is programmed to take between six to eight months. In line with the approach we have taken in other cases, the SOBC programme will build in engagement with the public and with businesses that depend on the new infrastructure coming forward.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1. The amended MTFP provides £0.5 million of capital in 2020-21 and £1 million of capital in 2021-22 to follow up on the A141 study.

- 5.2. Our most up to date estimate is that a SOBC for the A141 bypass will cost £350,000 and for St Ives £500,000. The latter will be subject to programme and costings developed by Cambridgeshire County Council.
- 5.3. Experience with the A10 project suggests that rapid progress can be made at SOBC stage through in-house procurement, although that approach requires such expenditure to be scored as revenue rather than capital. Officers have identified revenue savings sufficient to fund the A141 SOBC work. It is therefore recommended that the A141 SOBC be funded from revenue and procurement carried out directly by the Combined Authority.
- 5.4. The St Ives SOBC will be funded through a capital grant to Cambridgeshire County Council, which will then procure contractors. The package of Quick Wins programme and costs will be developed further and brought back to the Combined Authority Committee and Board for approval.

6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. There are no legal implications in relation to the recommendations.

7.0 OTHER SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. No significant implications have been identified at this stage.

8.0 APPENDICES

- 8.1. Appendix 1 – A141 and St Ives Transport Studies – Option Assessment report Executive Summary
- 8.2. The full Option Assessment report is available to view at:

<https://cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk/about-us/programmes/transport/a141-board-papers/>

<u>Background Papers</u>	<u>Location</u>
1: March 2018 Combined Authority Board Paper	1: March Board Paper
2: January 2020 Combined Authority Transport and Infrastructure Committee Paper	2: Huntingdon Transport Strategic Study T&I Paper