



campaigning
by the
Railway Development
Society Limited

Department for Transport
A14 Challenge Team
Roads Policy
Great Minster House,
33 Horseferry Road,
London
SW1P 4DR

Please Reply to:
24 Bure Close
St. Ives
Cambridge
PE27 3FE

Tel: (01480) 495101
E-Mail: nick.dibben@railfuture.org.uk

Dear Sir,

A14 Consultation Response

Introduction

Railfuture is a national voluntary group that campaigns for better use of our railway network for both passenger and freight. We are organised in England as twelve regional branches plus two national branches covering Scotland and Wales. The East Anglia Branch has produced this response, with contributions from adjacent Railfuture Branches and National Committees.

We welcome this opportunity to submit suggestions for ways to deal with the traffic problems associated with the A14 in the Cambridge area.

This response concentrates on the public transport alternatives that could help reduce congestion on this road. Rail in particular, with its advantages of offering high volume and high speed, can provide a realistic alternative to many existing traffic flows on the A14.

Within this response, reference to the Output 1 report refers to the A14 Study Output 1 report produced by Steer Davies Gleave for the Department of Transport for the A14 consultation process.

Public Transport Alternatives to using A14

The following section contains details of improvements to local and regional public transport and rail freight that would provide alternatives to the A14 within Cambridgeshire. Although each individual scheme may only have small impact on A14 traffic levels, taken together they can provide a realistic alternative to increased car and lorry traffic. These schemes would also provide other transport benefits and their impact on the A14 is just one consideration.

www.railfuture.org.uk www.railfuturescotland.org.uk www.railfuturewales.org.uk
www.railwatch.org.uk

Local Bus services

Cambridge has an extensive bus network of routes to surrounding market towns and larger villages. Like many bus networks it suffers from a number of limitations, these include:

- Lack of evening services on many routes
- Bus routes do not serve business parks and industrial areas.
- Not all market towns are linked by direct bus routes
- Higher cost for an all bus operator tickets
- Poor local promotion of services
- Frequent changes to timetables (often cuts) that does not provide confidence to possible users to switch from using their cars

These issues also apply to the newly opened Busway where services to the Science Park finish early evening. The result is that many workers having no realistic alternative to using their cars to get to and from work. Proposals by Cambridgeshire County Council to withdraw bus subsidies will make matters worse.

There is a need to ensure that any new development is well served by public transport from the start. This requires public transport to adjacent towns and villages, and access to the local railway station for longer distance journeys.

At present bus journeys between Huntingdon and Cambridge take over 1 hour as the buses travel around the residential areas of Huntingdon and St Ives. Whilst this provides good access to the bus network, overall journey times are slow. There is scope for faster buses from Huntingdon running along the A14 with a possible park and ride side in the Godmanchester area.

Proposal 1: Consider extended bus operational hours and new routes to link residential and business areas. Bus services to be promoted locally as an alternative to car use.

Cambridge Science Park Station

Although this proposed new station will relieve pressure on the existing Cambridge Station, it will also have an important role in moving commuters and visitors into the Science Park. Access to the Science Park is currently difficult using public transport from most of the Greater Cambridge Area. Most will drive, as access from the existing station is slow. Many existing train services from the south that currently terminate at Cambridge Station can be extended to the Science Park Station. The new station will therefore enable public transport access from Whittlesford, Royston, Ely, March, Peterborough and towards Norwich. There is scope to take many journeys off the A14.

Compared with the major employment centres of Cambridge City Centre and Addenbrookes Hospital, the Science Park has limited bus services from other parts of Cambridge. For the new station to be a successful interchange, improved bus services to the station and proper signage from the A10/A14 will be required.

Proposal 2: Build Cambridge Science Park station and develop into a major transport hub with good connecting local bus services

Improved Regional Train services

The following existing train services provide alternatives to the A14:

- Peterborough – Ipswich (Operated by Great Anglia franchise, every 2 hours)
- Birmingham-Peterborough-Cambridge-Stansted Airport (Cross-country -hourly)
- Liverpool- Peterborough-Ely-Norwich (East Midlands Trains -hourly)
- Cambridge – Ipswich (Greater Anglia - hourly)
- Cambridge –Norwich (Greater Anglia - hourly)

These services have seen improvements in recent years, for example extra carriages on the Cambridge-Norwich and Cambridge – Ipswich services. Peak hour services are well-loaded to/from Cambridge and overcrowding can be an issue. Increasing the service frequency will encourage more people to use these services.

In the longer term, extending the East-West Rail Scheme beyond Bedford to Cambridge would provide further opportunities for increasing the use of public transport for longer distance journeys.

Proposal 3: Consider additional carriages and increased frequency on regional train services

Rail freight Options

The Output 1 report notes the large number of Heavy Commercial Vehicles (HCV) using the A14 with the statement that each HCV takes up the space of 2.5 cars. These figures show that HCVs take up a large amount of road space. Therefore removing HCVs from the road can have significant benefits in terms of traffic congestion as well as reduced local pollution and road maintenance requirements.

Network Rail’s London and South East Route Utilisation Strategy (RUS), issued July 2011 indicates an intention to cater for a large increase in the number of freight trains operated as shown in the table below:

Terminal	Trains per day each way in 2010	Trains per day each way in 2031
Felixstowe	28	58
North Thames	8	50
North Kent	9	24
Channel Tunnel	6	35

It is also proposed to increase train lengths for intermodal trains from 22 up to 30 wagons.

Whilst traffic from Felixstowe will have the greatest impact on the A14, some of the road traffic from the other locations listed above would also be routed via the M11 and A14 to reach the Midlands, North East and North West of the country.

Although much of the increased rail traffic will deal with growth at the ports, there is also scope for increased modal shift, especially from the Thames area. This has been underplayed by the Output 1 report. The Network Rail RUS and Port of Felixstowe data shows that the rail modal share from the port has increased from 23% in 2008 to over 30% in 2011. Similar increases have been recorded at Southampton Docks following the recent upgrade of the rail route.

Railfuture consider that a 40% modal share is not unreasonable and should be included in future stages of the A14 study.

To accommodate this additional rail freight from Felixstowe, a number of capacity enhancements have been identified and are in the various stages of development.

Scheme	Notes
Part double tracking Felixstowe line	Planning requirement for port expansion, agreed delay until 2018
Bacon Curve Ipswich	At Planning Inquiry
Ely-Soham double track	Announced in Government Autumn Statement

Further work is currently being undertaken or planned at other locations, for example at Peterborough, Leicester and Nuneaton. These projects will need to be completed as soon as possible.

In the longer term, additional rail tracks may be required at Ely to enable the busy junction to deal with the freight from Felixstowe and North Thameside plus the additional passenger services noted above. Consideration should also be given to the re-opening of the March to Spalding route as a heavy freight railway providing a route to/from the North and Scotland.

Proposal 4: Complete work on the Felixstowe to Nuneaton Freight upgrade as quickly as possible and consider any additional requirements needed to achieve a 40-45% modal share from Felixstowe Port.

Other Rail Freight

If the percentage HCV traffic on the A14 from Felixstowe is small, there is a need to further investigate the origin and finishing points of HCV traffic to identify any scope for transferring some of this traffic onto rail. Possible traffic includes:

The port and industrial areas of North Thameside and North Kent, where rail connected facilities already exist and can be used more intensively.

The Channel Tunnel – The amount of rail freight using the Channel Tunnel is currently very small with only a handful of the allocated freight paths being used. The key issue appears to be Tunnel access charges. High charges are pricing through rail freight away. The Government need to address this as a matter of urgency. The Government should also identify any other barriers to rail freight such as unrealistic safety rules and problems of running international freight trains.

To encourage more freight traffic onto the railways, additional road/rail interchange depots are needed around the country as the recent Government report on the subject. In particular, any study should address supermarket delivery. The major supermarkets already use rail as part of their distribution chain. The latest development is to use intermodal trains for two-way traffic; distribution to shops is carried one way and the return journey used for goods from processing factories. With the region a major food producer, there should be scope for one of more such sites in East Anglia to the east of Cambridge. Co-operation will be required between the Government and the private sector to develop these proposals.

Proposal 5: Identify and remove the barriers to rail freight trains using the Channel Tunnel.

Proposal 6: Identify sites east of Cambridge for new road/rail freight interchanges for domestic traffic.

Road Management

The Output 1 report notes that traffic information signage and other management measures installed on adjacent sections of the A14 have not been implemented. This work should now be carried out as soon as possible.

Consideration should also be given to a reduced speed limit, say 50mph or variable speed limits along this section of the road. Reducing the speed and the speed difference between vehicles will increase the capacity of the road.

Proposal 7: Implement traffic management schemes and variable speed limits on the road.

There are a number of ways to reduce the number of cars during peak periods. These include car share schemes, staggered working hours and encouraging people to work at home some days each week.

Proposal 8: Work with local companies to introduce car share, and different ways of working to reduce the number of cars that need to use the road during the peak period.

Railfuture is not convinced that banning HCVs on the road during peak periods is a simple solution or that it would work. To implement the scheme would require at least 4 HCV waiting areas; A14 east of Cambridge, A14 west of Huntingdon, M11 northbound and A1 southbound. The lack of existing service areas, will mean that new sites will be required at considerable cost and impact on the local environment.

Long-term Road Solutions

Railfuture does not have any specific suggestions for a long-term road solution. However the following issues should be considered for any new roads.

- As some accidents can block both carriageways, this suggests the need for proper alternative routes – This could be the A428 or the creation of parallel local road as the original Highways Agency scheme
- At the time of the Regional Spatial Strategy examination in public, the Highways Agency indicated that once any new road was built, traffic levels would increase and quickly fill up all the new capacity. This is not a long term solution
- The impact of a large increase in traffic on local roads within Cambridge and the surrounding towns needs to be considered.
- Extra traffic on local roads will affect the reliability of local bus services including the guided bus.
- Any scheme needs to minimise disruption during construction, therefore must maintain 2 lanes open in each direction.
- If a toll road is proposed, the lessons from the M6 Toll must be learnt. Many drivers prefer to stay on the old un-tolled road. This factor would be relevant to the A14 if a parallel local road were provided.

- At the time of the Regional Spatial Strategy examination in public, a study was carried out into the effects of a regional road-pricing scheme. The results showed that this could be an effective way of reducing road traffic and encouraging modal shift.