

Outline scope for Strategic Gateway Review: Ely to Cambridge Corridor Study

Duration: November 2024 – April 2025 (with an early initial findings update in January 2025)

Whom: Independent assessment (external)

Report to: Combined Authority's Transport and Infrastructure Committee (TIC)

Engagement with: Cambridgeshire County Council's Highways and Transport Committee, relevant stakeholders

Background

The current Ely to Cambridge Corridor Study focuses on movement along the strategic corridor between Ely and Cambridge and explores opportunities to address existing and future challenges around capacity and road safety.

The study area covers the A10 between the A10/A142 roundabout to the south of Ely and ending before the Milton interchange on the A14. In addition, the study considers the impacts of improvements on the surrounding area too. Thereby the wider study area helps us to look at possible options that do not only focus solely on the A10 itself.

As well as this A10 Corridor Study, there are significant junction capacity improvements being delivered by Waterbeach New Town as well as schemes with dependences outside this A10 Corridor Study that are looking at the A10/A14 Junction, Milton Interchange, and another for the A10 BP Roundabout crossing facility. In particular, improvements associated with delivery of Waterbeach New Town include a relocated rail station, Waterbeach to Cambridge busway and a number of active travel routes. We should also note that it seems essential to review whether the scheme should widen its scope to include the A10/A14 Junction, Milton Interchange, and at the other end the A10 BP Roundabout at Ely.

The stated objectives of the study are:

- Maintain and enhance the productivity of the economy - delivering transport and digital connectivity improvements that better connect employment and housing;
- Supporting prosperous and growing communities - improving connectivity that will improve health, wellbeing, and quality of life; and
- Improving the environment and contributing to net zero ambitions - creating a low carbon, environmentally sustainable transport network that will reduce pollution and improve air quality.

One of the key reasons as to why we are undertaking the A10 Corridor Study is that current users experience congestion due to the volume of traffic, mix of vehicles including HGVs and agricultural vehicles, and frequent road traffic incidents, particularly clustered around junctions. For non-motorised users and active travel users in particular, the A10 fails to provide an attractive route due to the absence of dedicated facilities.

These existing issues create a constraint on the economic performance of the region and negatively impacts on the health, social wellbeing and environment within the local area. These existing issues could potentially be exacerbated by the planned substantial growth in the corridor and region (including 44,000 jobs in Cambridge and Waterbeach New Town) if sustainable transport infrastructure is not in place.

The Corridor Study is aimed to complete the preparation of an Outline Business Case (OBC) to Green Book standards, in alignment with the Combined Authority's and Cambridgeshire County Council's (CCC) assurance and governance requirements.

Current position

Due to considerable changes in travel behaviour since the COVID-19 pandemic and increased policy emphasis on carbon savings there was a need to review previous study findings. WSP were commissioned by Cambridgeshire County Council and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority to prepare an Strategic Outline Business Case Addendum prior to the submission of the OBC to the Department for Transport (DfT).

This entailed a review and validation of the July 2020 Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) to make sure that changes in national and localised policies, standards, guidelines, and data were considered. This was to ensure that the project continued to meet the requirements of grant funding from the Department for Transport (DfT). The SOBC revalidation commenced in Sept 2022 and was completed in July 2023.

Although this stage has now completed consideration will now also be needed for more recent changes in national government and local stakeholder views.

Depending on the options taken forward, the A10 scheme is expected to provide opportunities to support the vision, set out in the draft Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP), to deliver a future in which the region and its people can thrive and in which transport underpins sustainable economic growth.

Introduction

This Strategic (Milestone) Gateway Review is a critical checkpoint and it should be comprehensive and the objectives are as follows:

1. To understand the 2024 strategic and national policy framework and direction
2. To review the current objectives and data against that framework
3. To review progress to date against that
4. To advise on recommendations and next steps
5. To propose a new timetable.

Timeline:

- November 4th 2024 – update to TIC on implementation of gateway review and expected outputs
- November 2024 – WSP/CCC complete and share agreed technical work along with associated documentation/reports
- November 2024 – CPCA appoint consultants for review
- November 2024 to March 2025 – gateway review underway including meetings with relevant stakeholders
- January 2025 – early view of initial findings and update to TIC
- February 2025 – interim report if required
- April 2025 – gateway review completed and report shared
- May 2025 – Mayoral and County Council elections
- May/June 2025 – update to TIC.

The detailed scope will include two phases:

Phase 1.

1. Project Objectives and Strategic Alignment

- Review of Objectives: Assess whether the project's objectives remain aligned with broader strategic goals, including national, regional, and local transport policies
- Benefits Realisation: Evaluate the progress towards achieving the anticipated benefits, including economic, environmental, and social outcomes arising from those objectives
- To make recommendations for how the project needs to further reflect/develop current policy.

2. Review of Current Governance and Decision-Making

- Governance Structure: Review the effectiveness of the governance arrangements, including alignment with constitutional requirements for the relevant authorities, roles, responsibilities, and decision-making processes
- Stakeholder Engagement: Assess the level of stakeholder engagement and the effectiveness of communication strategies with key stakeholders, including government bodies, local communities, and partners
- To make recommendations for future governance and decision making for the scheme.

3. Review of Current Project Management and Delivery

- **Project Plan and Schedule:** Review the project timeline, key milestones, and the likelihood of meeting scheduled deadlines
- **Risk Management:** Evaluate the identification, assessment, and management of risks, issues and dependencies including any emerging risks and their potential impact on the project
- **Resource Management:** Assess the adequacy and allocation of resources, including financial, human, and technical resources
- To make recommendations for the future project management and delivery.

4. Financial Performance and Funding

- **Budget Review:** Assess the project's financial performance against the approved budget, including any variances and their causes
- **Funding Status:** Review the status of funding, including any changes in funding sources, availability of funds, and the impact on project delivery
- **Value for Money:** Consider whether the project continues to offer value for money, considering cost-benefit analysis and any changes in the economic environment
- To make recommendations for continuing work around financial performance and funding.

5. Communications and Public Relations

- **Public Communication Strategy:** Assess the effectiveness of public communication strategies, including how well the project is engaging with the public and managing public expectations
- **Crisis Management:** Review the preparedness for managing any public relations issues or crises that may arise
- To make recommendations for future communications and public relations in relation to the project.

Phase 2.

6. Procurement and Contract Management

- **Procurement Strategy:** Evaluate the effectiveness of procurement strategies and processes for this stage of the project, including the selection of contractors and suppliers
- **Contract Management:** Review the management of contracts of this stage of the project, including performance against contractual obligations and the handling of any disputes or variations
- To make recommendations for future procurement exercises and continuing contract management.

7. Technical and Design Aspects

- **Design Review:** Assess the progress and adequacy of the design work, ensuring it meets the project requirements and is feasible
- **Technical Challenges:** Review any technical challenges encountered and the effectiveness of the strategies employed to address them
- To make recommendations around design work and technical challenges for this project.

8. Sustainability and Environmental Impact

- **Environmental Compliance:** Review the project's compliance with environmental regulations and its progress in achieving sustainability targets
- **Mitigation Measures:** Assess the effectiveness of environmental mitigation measures and their implementation
- To make recommendations relating to this project's approach to sustainability and environmental impact.

9. Future Outlook and Contingency Planning

- **Scenario Planning:** Consider potential future scenarios that could impact the project, including changes in policy, technology, or funding
- **Contingency Plans:** Review the robustness of contingency plans in place to address unforeseen issues that may arise during the remaining phases of the project
- To make recommendations for future outlook and contingency planning.

10. Regulatory and Legal Compliance

- **Compliance Review:** Ensure the project complies with all relevant legal and regulatory requirements, including safety standards and transport regulations
- **Legal Risks:** Assess any legal risks or challenges that could impact the project and the strategies in place to manage them
- To make recommendations around regulatory and legal compliance for this project.

11. Lessons Learned

- **Continuous Improvement:** Review lessons learned from the current phase and how they are being applied to improve future project delivery
- **Benchmarking:** Compare project performance against similar projects or industry benchmarks to identify areas for improvement.