



Transport & Infrastructure Committee

4 November 2024

Title:	A141 & St. Ives Improvement Study – update on progress and public consultation
Report of:	Matthew Lutz, Transport Programme Manager
Lead Member:	Cllr Anna Smith, Lead Member for Transport and Infrastructure
Public Report:	Yes
Key Decision:	No
Voting Arrangements:	No vote required

Recommendations:

A	Note the update on A141 & St. Ives Improvement Study project progress and delivery including public consultation exercise.
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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">• Support adaptable communities and cultural opportunities for a great living environment in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.• Develop transport infrastructure for sustainable growth.• Reduce road accidents.• Deliver environmental actions, infrastructure sufficiency, preservation, and safety.

1. Purpose

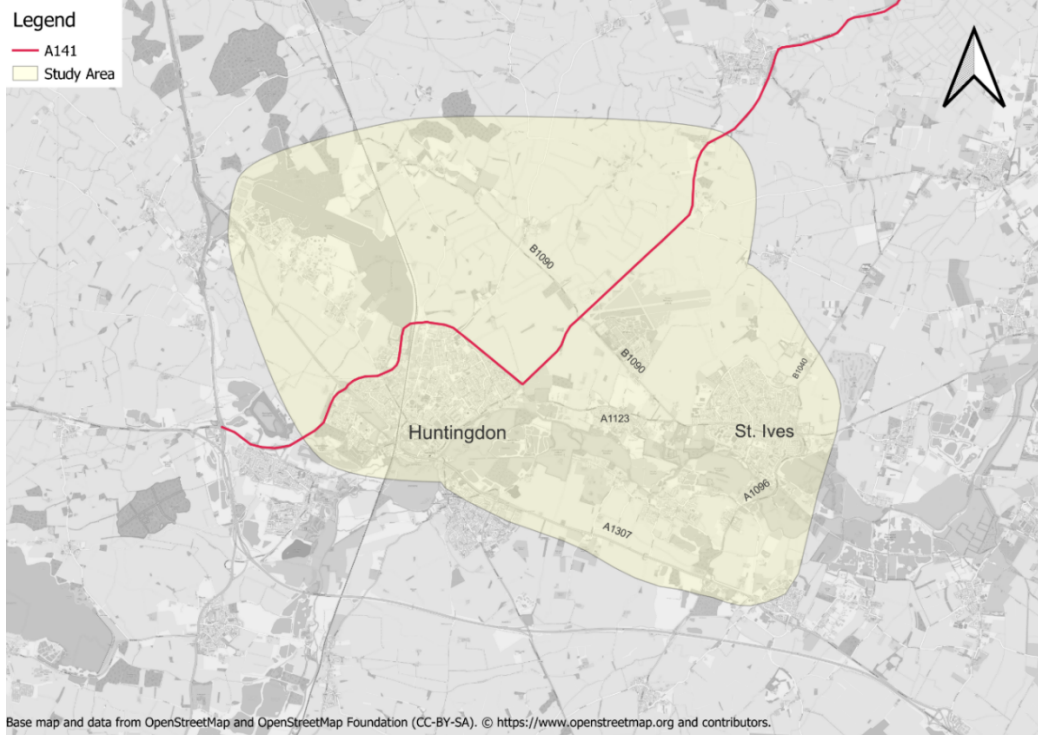
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| 1.1 | To provide an update on the project's progress to date and to engage in the public consultation and help facilitate communication with residents and stakeholders. |
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2. Proposal

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| 2.1 | <p>This paper provides an update on the progress of the A141 & St. Ives Improvement Study project to date and the current public consultation exercise.</p> <p>In July 2024, the Combined Authority provided a project update to the Transport and Infrastructure Committee (TIC), which included plans for a public engagement exercise set to commence in October 2024.</p> |
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3. Background

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| 3.1 | <p>The <i>A141 and St Ives Improvements Study</i> considers the upgrading of the transport network on the A141 corridor and around Huntingdon and St Ives. Through the improvements outlined within the study, the Combined Authority aim to support local and long-distance connectivity.</p> <p>The study strongly aligns with the Combined Authority's Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP) and Huntingdonshire District Council's (HDC) Local Plan, which states that "<i>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.</i>"</p> |
| 3.2 | <p>Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) has been commissioned to deliver an Outline Business Case (OBC). The Combined Authority is the project sponsor, and the decisions are made through the Transport and Infrastructure Committee.</p> |
| 3.3 | <p>The A141 is crucial for connectivity across 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 & March, 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 transport network is important for the people and businesses within the market town of St.Ives and its surrounding villages.</p> <p>The A1123 serves as a crucial east-west corridor through St Ives. To the west, it connects St Ives with Huntingdon and RAF Wyton via the B1090 and the A141 corridor, which integrates with the A14 and A1 strategic road networks. Eastward, the A1123 extends to Earith and the local quarries. Additionally, to the south of St Ives, the A1096 (Harrison Way/London Road) links to the A14 via the A1307, further enhancing regional connectivity.</p> |



3.4 Key challenges on the A141 and St Ives road network include peak hour congestion, unreliable journey times, rat-running, road safety concerns, poor active travel options, noise, air quality issues, and inadequate public transport.

In the 2021 public consultation, the top concerns were congestion, heavy traffic, and road safety, with additional worries about air quality and journey times.

Progress to Date

The A141 and St Ives transport schemes began as parallel projects. Feedback from two public surveys in 2021 highlighted concerns around HGVs, air quality, congestion, and active travel. There was strong public support for reducing road traffic and promoting active travel, with a preference for a mix of bypass routes and sustainable transport options to address both immediate and long-term needs.

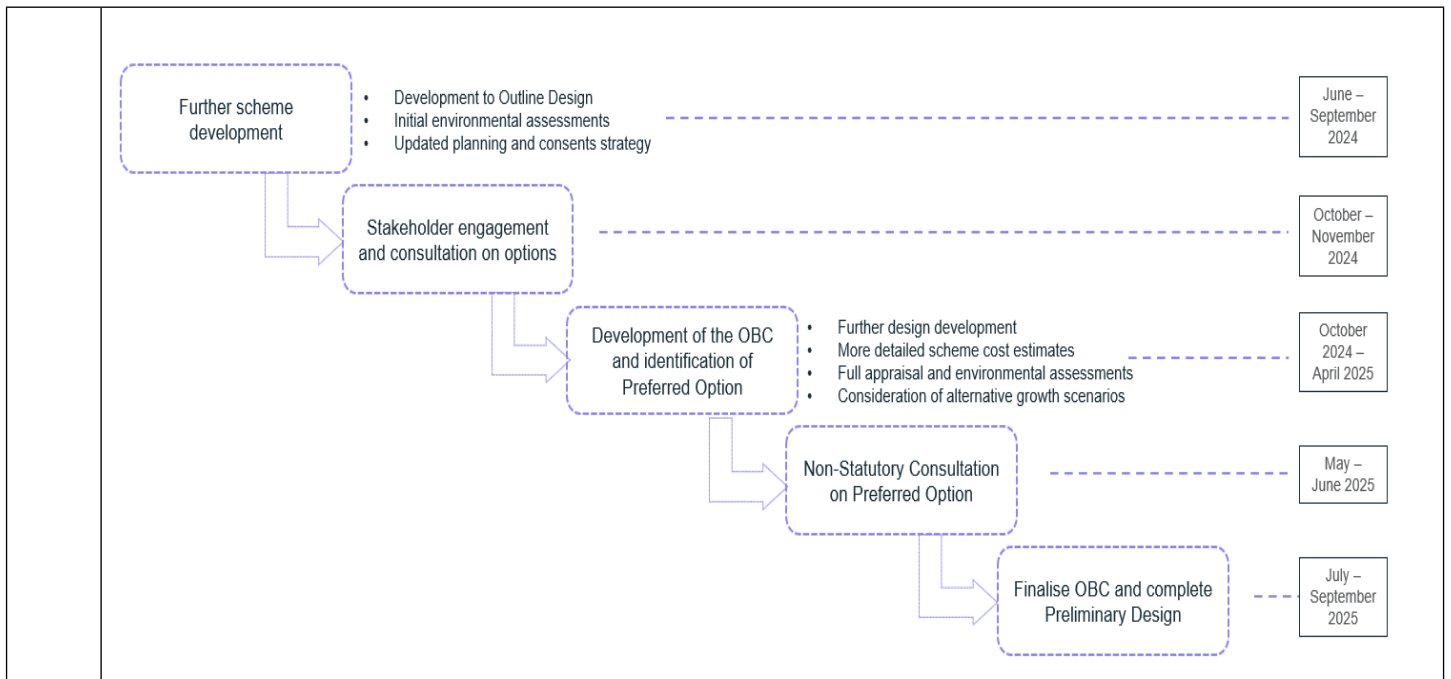
3.5 In November 2021, after considering the consultation reports for the two separate schemes, the Combined Authority agreed to merge them into one joint scheme because:

- 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.

An Options Appraisal Report (OAR) and Strategic Outline Case (SOC) have been produced that explains why the project should be taken forward and the initial shortlisted options. They showed how the projects relate to other schemes in the wider area.

3.6 Since the completion of the previous project stage, several key policy shifts at the local, regional, and national levels have emerged, including a stronger emphasis on decarbonisation and addressing climate change risks. To align with these changes, CCC, acting on behalf of the Combined Authority, and their principal consultants AtkinsRealis, have efficiently revisited earlier work. This process involved reassessing initial assumptions and refining the option packages to better incorporate sustainable and active travel considerations, ensuring that the updated options are both current and aligned with evolving policy priorities.

	<p>During the revalidation of the original SOBC, it became clear that additional work was needed to assess the benefits of strategic passenger transport initiatives, alongside limited road-based interventions, integrated with passenger transport and active travel measures. This required further transport modelling to evaluate the effectiveness of each option, leading to a necessary extension of the programme.</p> <p>While the SOBC refresh is nearing completion, additional efforts are underway to gather supporting data for refining the new shortlist of options. AtkinsRealis has updated the timeline for the full business case, now scheduled for completion by early Autumn 2025. To manage this, Programme Risk Reduction meetings are being held, and steps are being taken to minimise any further delays, ensuring the project stays on track.</p>
3.7	<p>AtkinsRealis has now advanced and completed the work to refresh and revalidate the SOBC. Three bypass options from the 2021 SOBC have been retained to gather further evidence and compare new packages. Additionally, a Strategic Public Transport (PT) Package has been developed to assess its merits relative to the bypass packages. This approach aligns with the goal of maximising the use of active travel and public transport before resorting to highway improvements, which should be kept to a minimum.</p> <p>Given concerns about whether the Strategic Public Transport (PT) Package alone could fully address congestion issues, a Hybrid Package has been devised, incorporating additional highway capacity. Further enhancement of public transport services led to the development of the 'Refined Hybrid' Package, aimed at supporting modal shifts for trips between Huntingdon and St Ives.</p> <p>A summary of the packages is provided in Error! Reference source not found. and plans of each package are provided in the appendix.</p>
3.8	<p>In terms of next steps, it is proposed that three options are taken forward for further assessment as part of the Outline Business Case (OBC). As outlined within the appendices, these options include:</p> <p>Refined Hybrid Package</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes an offline single carriageway bypass between Spittals and the existing A141 at Wyton Airfield with connecting junctions to the existing road network; • Bus lanes at A1123 and B1514; • Active travel and public transport connections; • Alternative routing of the 'Strategic Public Transport' service in Huntingdon; and • Extension of an extended Guided Bus Service (Cambridge to St. Ives and Alconbury Weald). <p>Refined Hybrid Package (variant)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same as above but this could include consideration of the High Growth Scenario and what impact this could have on the package in terms of site-specific interventions. <p>Low-Cost Option</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looking at what would be the minimum investment required to align with the scheme objectives. <p>These options will be developed further as part of the outline design process. Briefings with Huntingdonshire District Council members and officers have taken place and Combined Authority officers will continue to engage as the project is taken forward.</p> <p>A paper will be tabled with the Investment Committee and subsequently the Transport and Infrastructure Committee ahead of a further public consultation on the preferred option which is then planned for late spring/summer 2025. Following this consultation, the OBC will be finalised alongside preliminary designs of the preferred option, which will be presented to TIC.</p> <p>The roadmap to the completed OBC is shown below.</p>



3.9 Consultation Update

CCC has officially launched a public consultation on the preferred hybrid package for the A141 and St Ives Improvements Scheme, following its initial presentation to the TIC in July 2024. This consultation seeks to engage the community and gather valuable feedback on the proposed measures, which will play a crucial role in shaping the development of the Outline Business Case.

Running from Wednesday 16 October to Wednesday 27 November, the consultation invites residents, businesses, and stakeholders to provide input on the key proposals. These are organised under three core themes that define the hybrid package: Active Travel, Public Transport, and Road Improvements. The public's views will be vital in refining the scheme to ensure it meets local needs while enhancing sustainability, connectivity, and transport efficiency across the region.

3.10 Public Engagement

After an extensive review and thorough assessment of various options and improvement measures, we are now ready to present the A141 and St Ives Travel Network Improvements Package. This public consultation offers our communities an opportunity to share their views and shape the final set of measures to be implemented.

Examples of public consultation materials can be found in Appendix A.

We encourage all stakeholders to participate and provide feedback to ensure that the final package reflects the needs and aspirations of the community while addressing the transport challenges of today and the future.

An online survey is available at www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/A141-StIves

Details of the consultation are available in local libraries and community hubs across the study area.

During the consultation period, we are holding two in-person and two virtual consultation events:

- Thursday 17/10/2024, 13:00-14:00: Online webinar
- Friday 18/10/2024, 15:00-19:00: The Coneygear Centre, Huntingdon, PE29 1PE
- Tuesday 5/11/2024, 9:00-14:00: St Ives Corn Exchange, St Ives, PE27 5AD
- Thursday 7/11/2024, 18:30-20:00: Online webinar.

We have asked local members to support the consultation by:

- Sharing the consultation details with their communities via their own networks and encouraging them to participate
- Working with the project team to communicate key information
- Giving us feedback on the proposals and any frequently asked questions they are asked that we can usefully include.

A full paper on the outputs and outcomes of the consultation will be reported to TIC in early 2025. Further design development will then be conducted to support a full appraisal of economic, social, and environmental impacts, leading to identification of the preferred option.

A TIC paper will then be tabled with the Investment Committee and subsequently the Transport and Infrastructure Committee ahead of a further public consultation on the preferred option which is planned for late spring/summer 2025. Following this consultation, the OBC will be finalised alongside preliminary designs of the preferred option, which will be presented to TIC in due course.

4. Appendices

- 4.1 Examples of A141 consultation materials:
- Appendix A – Consultation Maps
 - Appendix B – A141 & St Ives Printed Leaflet
 - Appendix C – A141 & St Ives Postcard

5. Implications

Financial Implications

- 5.1 To date, funding for this study has primarily been sourced from the Department for Transport's Transforming Cities Fund (TCF). By the end of the 2024/25 financial year, it is anticipated that approximately £7.7 million of TCF funding will have been allocated to support this project. Additionally, there is a further £3 million earmarked, pending approval in the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP), designated for ongoing development work. The projected allocation of this funding is estimated as follows:

	£000
2024/25	1,500
2025/26	1,500

In light of the current funding landscape, it is important to understand that the estimated at £200 million for this scheme is not presently available. To move forward effectively, the Combined Authority and its partners must collaboratively explore opportunities for securing financial support through bids to the Department for Transport (DfT) and as part of the Local Growth Plan development. This may need to involve leveraging both public and private investment to access the necessary funds. By conducting this preparatory work, we can develop a robust business case that clearly demonstrates the project's value and viability, positioning us favourably for potential funding opportunities. It is crucial that we work together to outline a strategic approach that maximises our chances of securing the investment needed to bring this initiative to fruition.

Legal Implications	
5.2	<p>There are no direct legal implications arising from the report at this stage as the consultation is planned for autumn this year.</p> <p>The Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010 requires public authorities to have due regard to certain equality considerations when exercising their functions such as making decisions. S.149 - 157 of the Equality Act 2010 sets out the general duty and is supported by specific duties found in regulations. The general duty requires decision-makers to have 'due regard' to the need to eliminate conduct prohibited by the act, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations in relation to activities such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommending new or revised public policy to a Minister; • Publishing a consultation document; and • Designing and providing a public service. <p>The Best Value Duty applies where authorities 'consider overall value, including economic, environmental, and social value when reviewing service provision'. In order to achieve the Best Value Duty, 'authorities remain under a duty to consult representatives of wide range of persons'. The duty to consult is not optional and section 3(2) of the Local Government Act 1999 provides details of those who should be engaged in consultations.</p>
Public Health Implications	
5.3	<p>One of the central objectives of the A141 & St. Ives Improvement Study is to enhance public health by prioritising accessibility, sustainability, and the well-being of the local community. This vision will be realised through transformative upgrades to the active travel infrastructure, encouraging walking, cycling, and other sustainable modes of transport. In parallel, the urban environment will undergo significant enhancements, creating more welcoming and user-friendly spaces that foster community interaction, reduce congestion, and promote a healthier lifestyle for all residents. These improvements aim to create a more connected, vibrant, and resilient area for the future.</p>
Environmental & Climate Change Implications	
5.4	<p>The A141 & St. Ives Improvement Study will drive significant environmental advancements by strategically investing in a suite of forward-thinking initiatives designed to promote sustainability, reduce carbon emissions, and strengthen urban resilience. By integrating green infrastructure, enhancing energy efficiency, and prioritising eco-friendly transport options, the project aims to not only mitigate environmental impacts but also future proof the region against climate challenges. This holistic approach to environmental stewardship will foster a healthier, more sustainable urban ecosystem that benefits both current residents and future generations.</p>
Other Significant Implications	
5.5	None.
Background Papers	
5.6	None.