

**Cambridge to Huntingdon  
improvement scheme** **A14**  
Consultation report – executive summary  
December 2013



# The scheme

The Government has confirmed up to £1.5bn in funding for the A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon improvement scheme. This project will reduce congestion on one of the busiest sections of the trunk road network in England and will help to unlock economic growth in Cambridgeshire, East Anglia and beyond. It will also increase local connectivity for those who live and work in the area and improve road safety by separating strategic from local traffic.

The proposed scheme, shown in figure 1, extends east from the existing A14 at Ellington to the Cambridge Northern Bypass at Milton, a distance of 21 miles. It includes a new bypass to the south of Huntingdon, carriageway widening on the existing A14 between Swavesey and Cambridge, and improvements to the Cambridge Northern Bypass. It also includes junction improvements, the widening of a 4½ mile section of the A1 trunk road between Brampton and Alconbury and nearly 7 miles of new local access roads.

Proposals to toll the Huntingdon Southern Bypass formed part of the scheme but were subsequently dropped by the Government in the Autumn Statement. For completeness, the Consultation Report includes a review of responses received on this subject although takes these no further now that tolling no longer forms part of the scheme.

The Government has tasked the Highways Agency, an executive agency of the Department for Transport, with the delivery of the A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon improvement scheme. The Highways Agency will review its plans for the proposed route in the light of the consultation feedback received and the Government's decision not to toll, and expects to publish a preferred route early in 2014.

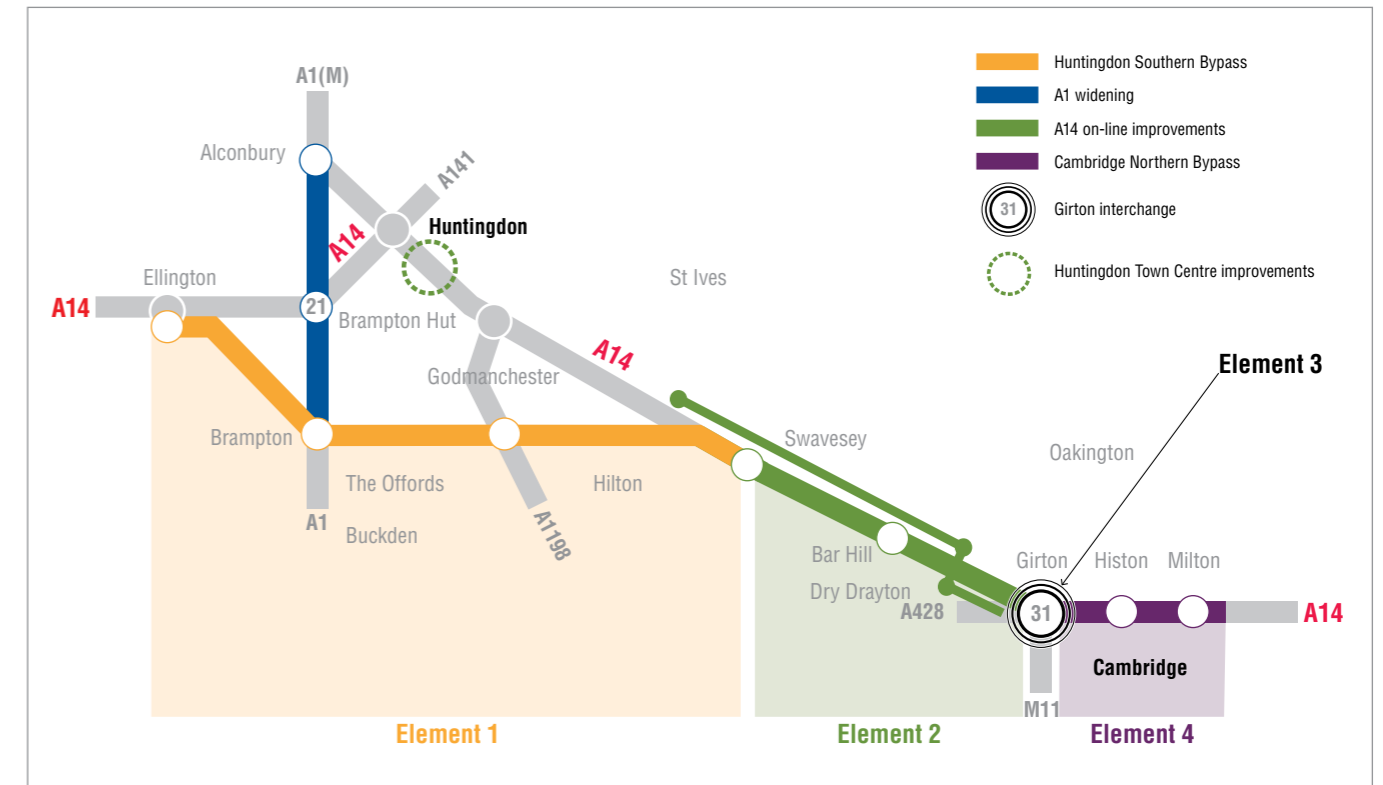


Figure 1: Proposed scheme

# The public consultation

Public consultation provides an important opportunity for Government and the Highways Agency to gain a better understanding of the views and expectations of local people, businesses, local authorities, communities and road-users.

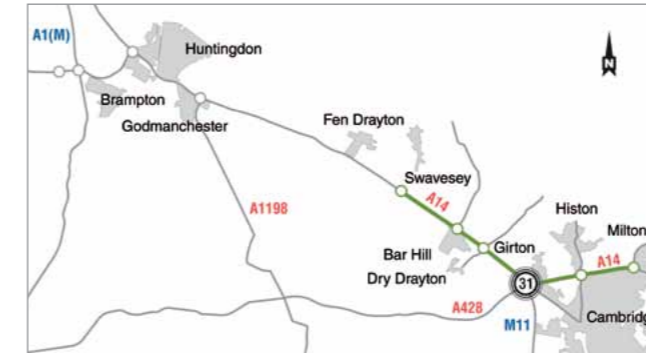
Statutory powers to construct the road will be sought under the Planning Act 2008, which sets out the obligations of the promoter in respect of consultation with stakeholders and communities. This public consultation exercise has preceded the statutory consultation process, but was undertaken in order to provide interested parties with up-to-date information on the scheme's progress and to gain an early understanding of public opinion and preferences.

The public consultation was held over a five-week period between 9 September and 13 October 2013. Some 15 public exhibitions were held within the A14 corridor between Huntingdon and Cambridge. The information was provided in the form of booklets, maps, and on the Highways Agency's website.

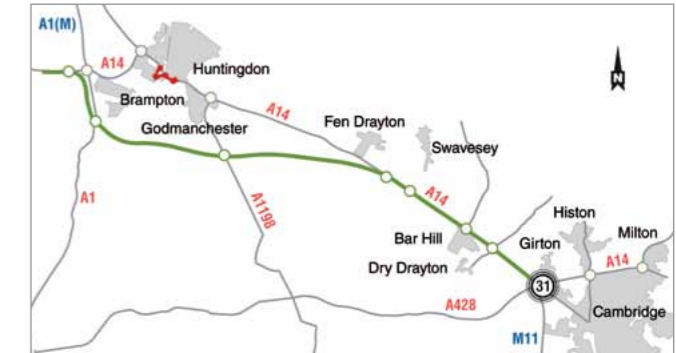
The consultation focused on establishing the best overall route for the scheme. On making a comparative assessment of the six alternative schemes identified in earlier Department for Transport (DfT) studies, shown in figure 2, and on testing public opinion on aspects of tolling. Nearly 1,400 responses were received from individuals, local authorities, businesses and interest groups and there was considerable press interest in the scheme.

In general, the public consultation was well received and exhibitions were widely attended. There was a good deal of interest from parish councillors and local authority members and officers, so a series of evening meetings were held with these groups as the consultation proceeded. Exhibitions were held at locations throughout the route corridor, in accordance with Highways Agency practice.

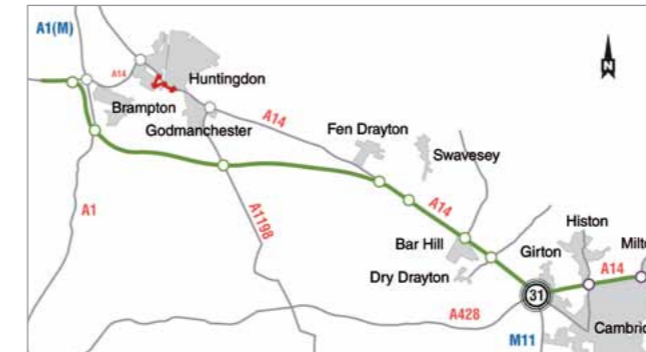
Option 1



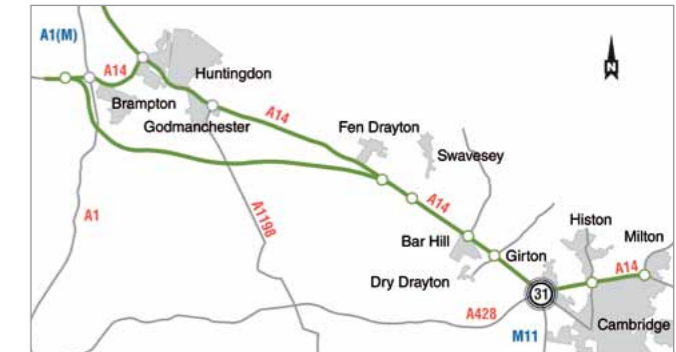
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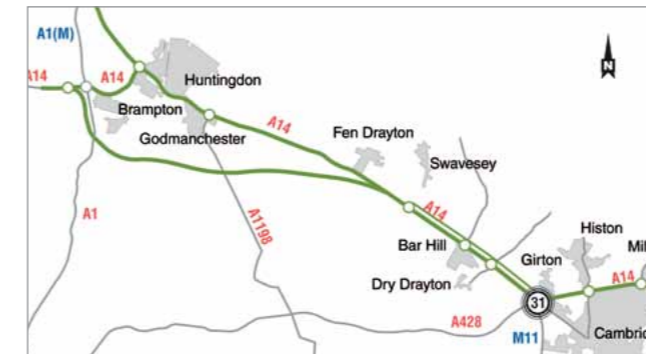
Option 3



Option 4



Option 5



Option 6

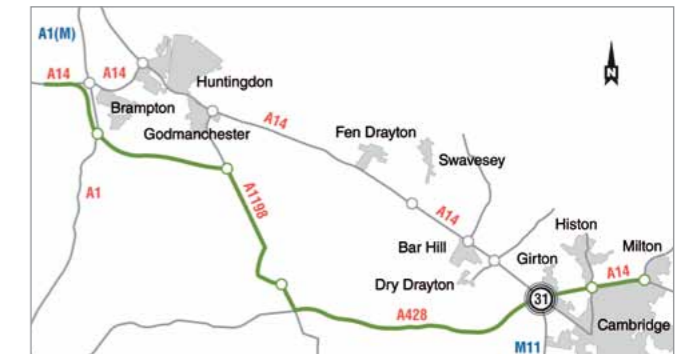


Figure 2: The Department for Transport A14 study options

# Overview of responses

## Key outcomes

The key outcomes from the public consultation were that:

- many people agreed that the scheme would reduce congestion and stimulate economic growth
- tolling is almost universally unpopular
- the route east of Swavesey – which involves the widening of existing sections of trunk road – is not particularly contentious
- there is a lack of support for the Huntingdon Southern Bypass, which we believe to be driven by concerns on tolling and that
- around half of respondents considered the A14 Huntingdon Viaduct should be retained as it was felt that it would form part of a toll-free alternative to the Huntingdon Southern Bypass.

The Government's proposals to introduce tolls on the Huntingdon Southern Bypass have significantly influenced the opinions and preferences of many respondents. The Highways Agency recognises that future stages in the consultation process will need to further explore peoples' thinking behind the issues raised, now that tolling plans have been dropped.

## General views on the scheme proposals

People's views on the scheme were sought by means of a questionnaire. This posed nine questions, seeking views on different aspects of the scheme in relation to the stated objectives. Responses are shown in figures 3 and 4.

Most people agreed that the proposed scheme would help to reduce congestion and stimulate economic growth with businesses, local authorities and freight groups welcoming the improvements in the road network. But there was no clear consensus on whether, in overall terms, the proposed scheme would meet the Government's strategic objectives for the project.

Most people believed that the Cambridge Northern Bypass, Girton junction (with the M11 and A428) and the section of the A14 between Cambridge and Huntingdon should be improved, but many people disagreed with the proposal to build a tolled Huntingdon Southern Bypass and to remove the existing A14 viaduct across the East Coast Mainline railway at Huntingdon Railway Station.

The proposals for tolling appear to have significantly influenced public opinion, as many people stated that they would support the scheme had tolling not been considered. By comparison, at a previous consultation exercise in 2005, more than four-fifths of respondents supported proposals to improve the A14 over a similar length.

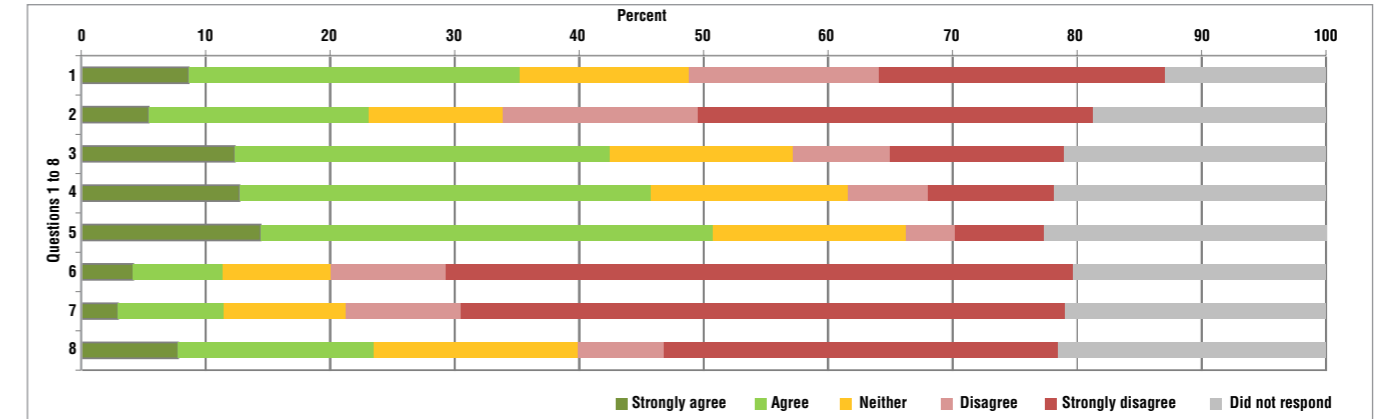


Figure 3: Consultation response to questionnaire

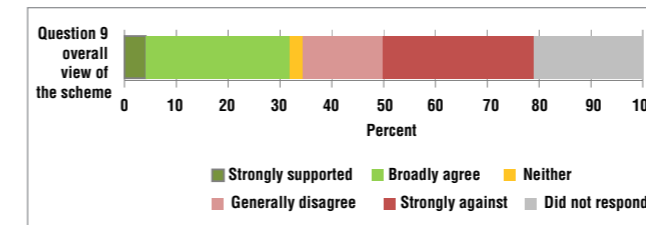


Figure 4: Overall level of support

The questionnaire posed the following statement and asked for people to score proposals for specific aspects of the proposed scheme in light of the objectives.

The proposed scheme should meet the project objectives of combatting congestion, unlocking growth, connecting people, improving safety and creating a positive legacy:

- 1 The alignment of the road
- 2 Element 1: Huntingdon Southern Bypass and A1 widening

- 3 Element 2: A14 online improvement
- 4 Element 3: Girton Interchange
- 5 Element 4: Cambridge Northern Bypass
- 6 Tolling the new road: Applying a toll to the Huntingdon Southern Bypass
- 7 Tolling the new road: Applying the toll between 06:00 and 22:00
- 8 Tolling the new road: Use of modern tolling technology
- 9 Taking into account all aspects of the proposed improvement scheme, how would you rate your overall view of the scheme?



## Views on tolling

Most respondents were against tolling as a means of part-funding the proposed scheme and local authorities and businesses in East Anglia felt that the introduction of tolls on this strategic route would disadvantage businesses in the region.

Many also expressed concern that some motorists would choose to avoid the tolled section, introducing additional traffic onto other, less suitable routes; in particular on the A428 trunk road, on the main road through St Ives, and in village settlements throughout the A14 corridor.

Plans to de-trunk the A14 through Huntingdon and to demolish the A14 viaduct over the East Coast Mainline railway were generally unpopular with respondents because they resulted in closure of the most direct, toll-free alternative to the Huntingdon Southern Bypass. However, the de-trunking proposals remain popular with the local authorities in Huntingdon and Cambridgeshire, whose ambitions are to improve air quality, reduce traffic noise, and promote local regeneration in Huntingdon.

## Views on route options

In addition to the proposed scheme, the public consultation exercise presented six highway route options developed by the DfT in its A14 Study during 2012.

Opinion on the choice of route was split between the proposed scheme and highway route option 5, which retains the existing A14 through Huntingdon and

creates a two-lane dual carriageway to the south of the town. However, comments received indicated that this split may be influenced by proposals to toll the southern bypass.

Some respondents suggested other route options or further investment in non-highways infrastructure or improved traffic management. Of particular significance was the A428 corridor, which some suggested could be upgraded as an alternative to improving the A14. However, previous studies have shown that an A428 improvement scheme would not achieve the same level of economic and strategic benefits as the proposed A14 scheme and would be more costly to deliver. The report also notes that significant improvements are already being made to the rail-freight network in the region, including the Felixstowe to Nuneaton line.

## Views on scheme costs and funding

Some respondents believed that, if the road was unaffordable to Central Government, it should not be built. Some also expressed concern that local authorities were being asked to contribute to the cost of the scheme as it was perceived that local people and businesses would, in effect, be helping to finance the project.

## Views on alignment of proposed route design and engineering

Respondents made a wide range of comments on the route alignment and junction proposals.

There was general agreement that it was sensible to separate local traffic from strategic through-traffic and on the additional benefits that this would bring to non-motorised road users. But a number of people raised concerns about the layout of junctions and proposed alternative links between the A14 trunk road and other routes.

Opinion was mixed on the removal of the A14 viaduct over the East Coast Mainline railway. Some felt there were good reasons (in terms of the environment and regeneration) for de-trunking the old route and removing the viaduct; others suggested that it may be more cost effective to retain the structure than to remove it now that repairs were in progress. A particular concern was raised in relation to agricultural traffic, which currently uses the trunk road and which would have no realistic alternative route because of weight restrictions on Brampton Road.

There was a high level of support for improvements to the Cambridge Northern Bypass and many people were pleased to see that proposals now included carriageway widening on the A1 between Brampton and Alconbury. Most people also agreed that the scheme would improve road safety on this section of the A14, but some felt that the scheme should be built to full motorway standards with hard shoulders and restrictions on the categories of traffic able to use it.

## Views on capacity and congestion

Some respondents were concerned that traffic modelling had not taken full account of the proposed scale of development in the A14 corridor and the diversionary effects of tolling.

While the public was aware of the separate consultation on route based strategies being carried out by the Highways Agency, concerns were raised about the impact of traffic and growth on other routes.

## Views on environmental and community issues

Proposals for de-trunking the existing A14 route through Huntingdon were seen by respondents as contributing to a general improvement in the local environment. By contrast, the construction of the Huntingdon Southern Bypass caused concern because of its visual impact on the open countryside through the Ouse Valley and because of its impact on air quality and noise. Some were also worried that the road might increase the risk of flooding and groundwater pollution in some areas.

While some respondents were sceptical about the wider legacy benefits that might be created, others suggested ideas that might be supported by the community and non-motorised road users. There was also concern that the scheme might sever local footpath and bridleway routes, while others saw the legacy dimension as an opportunity to reinstate lost rights of way.

## Summary of findings

Aspect of the scheme	What you said	The way ahead
<b>Approach to public consultation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>well received in general</li> <li>exhibitions should have been more extensive</li> <li>longer consultation period would have been better</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>further consultation next year on preferred route</li> <li>strengthen communications with stakeholders</li> <li>improve access to information</li> </ul>
<b>General views of scheme proposals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a need to do something to combat congestion</li> <li>belief that scheme will promote economic growth</li> <li>support improvement to Cambridge Northern Bypass</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>announce preferred route early in 2014</li> <li>further assessment of traffic and economic benefits</li> <li>development consent order application in late 2014</li> </ul>
<b>Tolling</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>generally unpopular with most respondents</li> <li>tolls will transfer more traffic onto local roads</li> <li>negative impact on economy of Suffolk and Norfolk</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Government has carefully considered public views</li> <li>tolling proposals have been dropped</li> </ul>
<b>Route options</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>agree with plans to widen A14 east of Swavesey</li> <li>opinion split between proposed scheme and Option 5</li> <li>should consider non-highway solutions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>multi-modal studies identified non-road measures</li> <li>re-evaluation of options following decision not to toll</li> <li>responses considered further in future design</li> </ul>
<b>Costs and funding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>should be funded solely by Central Government</li> <li>scheme costs have increased since 2010</li> <li>expensive relative to benefits offered</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local government contributions remain important</li> <li>will continue to focus on value-for-money in design</li> <li>aim is to deliver below the £1.5bn budget</li> </ul>
<b>Alignment and engineering</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>mixed views on removal of A14 Huntingdon viaduct</li> <li>like plans to separate local and strategic traffic</li> <li>should consider building a motorway-standard road</li> <li>future-proof against further development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>seek environmental benefits in Huntingdon</li> <li>re-evaluate route option based on decision not to toll</li> <li>junctions will have capacity for future developments</li> <li>road safety is a major influencer on design standards</li> </ul>
<b>Capacity and congestion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>challenged whether traffic model was suitable</li> <li>concerned that existing congestion would remain in A14 corridor</li> <li>congestion might just transfer onto other roads</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>traffic model to be refined in next stage of scheme</li> <li>scheme will address congestion in A14 corridor</li> <li>Highways Agency route based strategies take wider view</li> </ul>
<b>Environment and the community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>positive impact in Huntingdon</li> <li>negative impact on Ouse Valley</li> <li>legacy benefits were challenged</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>master-planning advice being received</li> <li>focus on effective environmental mitigation</li> <li>extensive local authority participation in future plans</li> </ul>

Figure 5

## Next steps

This report provides a summary of what Members of Parliament, local authorities, local communities, businesses and the freight haulage operators have said to the Highways Agency about the scheme proposals. The full consultation report can be downloaded via the Highways Agency's website at <http://www.highways.gov.uk/roads/road-projects/a14-cambridge-to-huntingdon-improvement-scheme/>

The consultation report also provides the Highways Agency's comments on these views and the actions that we propose to take to address the points which have been raised. These are set down within the summary of findings, figure 5.

The Development Consent Order (DCO) process provides stakeholders and the community with further opportunities to contribute to the development of the scheme, through formal consultation to be carried out by the Highways Agency and by making representations to the Planning Inspectorate once the application has been submitted and registered. The Highways Agency will take every opportunity to engage with those who have a view in order to develop a transport solution that is best for the community, the region, and the country and welcomes feedback, whether this is through the formal consultation or by means of the Highways Agency's various communications channels.

Further consultation will follow on the preferred route in Spring 2014 before a Development Consent Order application is submitted towards the end of 2014.

We will be developing a Statement of Community Consultation with surrounding local authorities which will explain how we will consult with the public as we progress towards submission of the Development Consent Order and this will be publicly available.

In addition and alongside ongoing development of the design, the Highways Agency will conduct more surveys and assessments of the local environment to ensure that local conditions are fully understood.

The Government and the Highways Agency are committed to delivering a highways improvement scheme that offers value for money, not only in transport terms, but also in the wider benefits it brings to the economy and the communities it affects.

### Feedback

Your feedback is important to us; please take the time to share your views on the findings of the public consultation using points of contact shown below.

**Highways Agency**  
**Woodlands, Manton Lane, Manton Industrial Estate**  
**Bedford MK41 7LW**

you can email us at:  
**A14Cambridgehuntingdon@highways.gsi.gov.uk**

or you can visit our website at:  
**www.highways.gov.uk/A14CambridgetoHuntingdon**



Proposed scheme

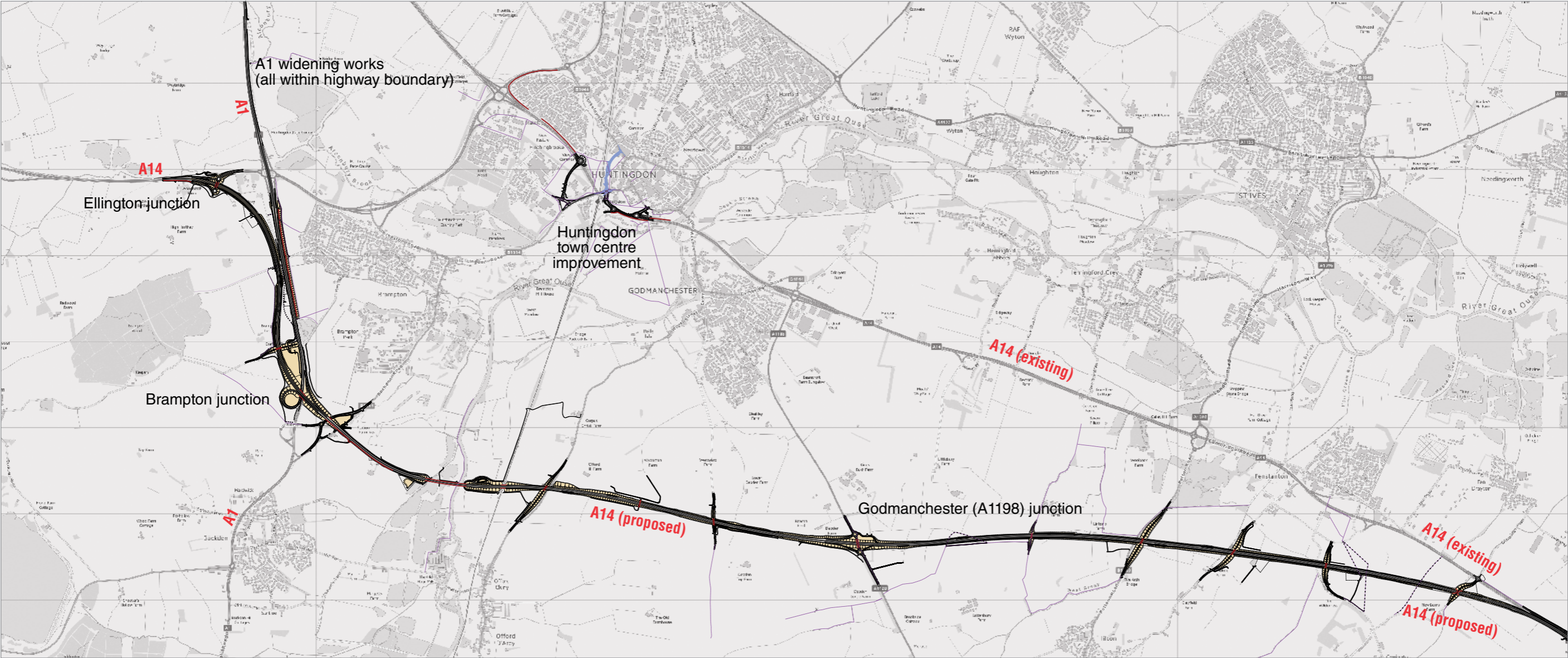


Figure 6



## Proposed scheme

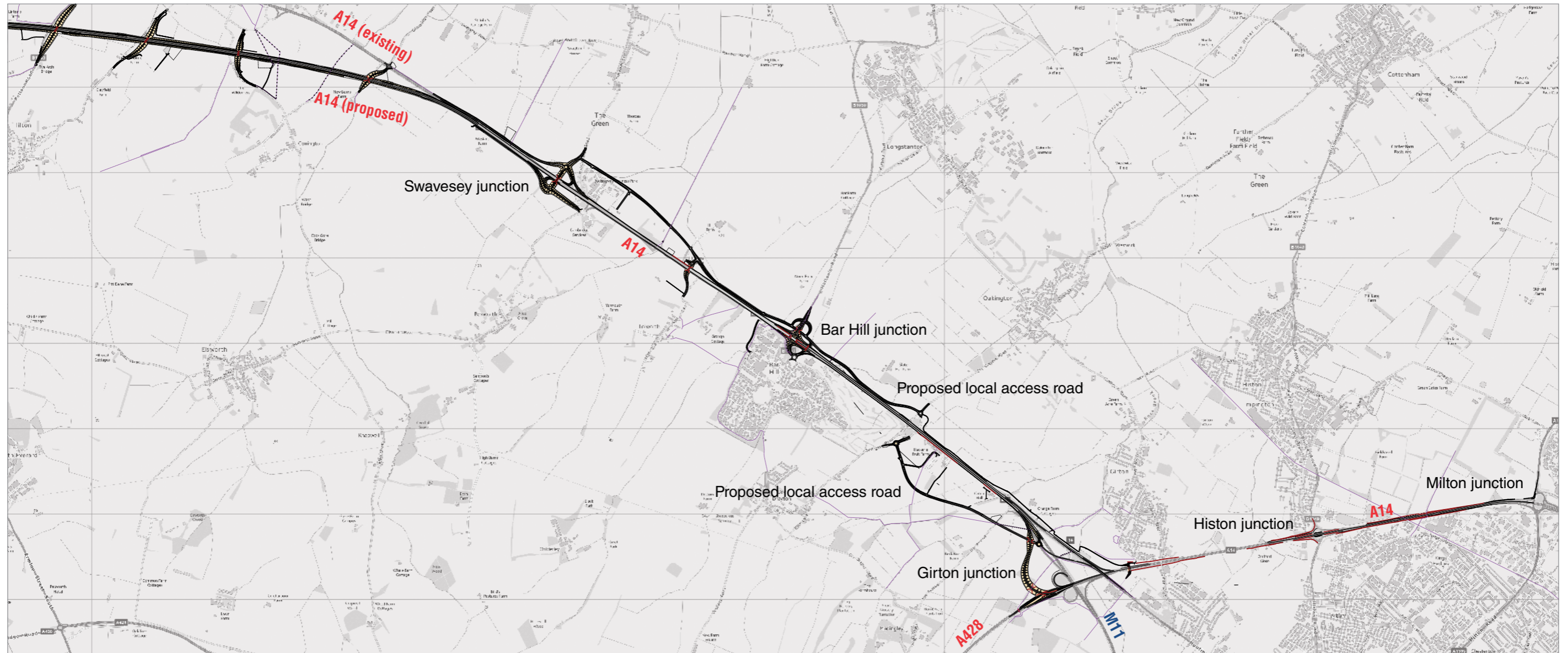


Figure 6



If you need help using this or any other Highways Agency information, please call **0300 123 5000\*** and we will assist you.

## Contact details

While the consultation on scheme options has been completed, we encourage you to continue to share your views with us:

**Highways Agency**  
**Woodlands, Manton Lane**  
**Manton Industrial Estate**  
**Bedford**  
**MK41 7LW**

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