

A1 EAST OF ENGLAND STUDY

TERMS OF REFERENCE

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Study Aim

1. The Road Investment Strategy (RIS) Investment Plan published in December 2014 describes the purpose of this study as follows:

“This study will look at bringing consistency to the southern section of the route, from the junction with the M25 in the south to Peterborough in the north. In particular, it will look at the case for improving the non-motorway section linking the two parts of the A1(M) to motorway standard.

Given the age of the road, much of the current route was chosen with little thought to the impact on the nearby environment. This study will examine whether improvements, including changing the alignment of the road, could reduce the environmental impact of the existing route and benefit local communities.”

2. The strategic aim of the **A1 East of England Study** is to identify and provide an initial appraisal of the improvements to the A1. For the better options, this will include the preparation of strategic outline business cases which can be considered in developing future Road Investment Strategies.
3. The A1 is one of our oldest trunk roads, and also one of the least consistent. With more than fifty years of local upgrades, the road today is a patchwork of different standards, ranging from four-lane motorway to elderly dual carriageway – sometimes in the same ten-mile stretch. Major upgrade work will improve the road to motorway standard in Yorkshire and to Expressway standard north of Newcastle. This study will investigate the feasibility of, and options for, upgrading and bringing consistency to the southern section of the route, from the junction with the M25 in the south, to junction 17 at Peterborough in the north.
4. As it passes through the East of England, the A1 corridor supports significant industry and housing. It is very important to the current and future economic growth prospects of the surrounding areas and is a centre of excellence for a variety of science and technology industries, housing a large number of major employers. Significant levels of both housing and employment growth are planned along the corridor, bringing with it the possibility of forging better connections between some key growth towns. However it is facing severe congestion-related challenges and this intrinsic economic potential may not be realised unless these can be addressed. Existing capacity problems and low travel speeds on numerous sections of the road are expected to continue or worsen without extensive intervention; commissioned schemes may alleviate

some pressure but will not address fundamental problems with other sections of the route.

5. The A1 in its current state changes several times between motorway and all-purpose standard within the study scope area. In the area close to or adjoining the M25, the A1(M) serves large communities and the business areas adjacent to them and is a major artery for communities further north. Yet the section between J1 and J3 is one of the least reliable on the entire A1. Further north, existing capacity problems on the A1(M) around Stevenage and Welwyn cause average speeds to drop to less than 40mph in peak periods and are expected to continue without more extensive intervention.
6. The next section, the all-purpose section of A1 between junction 10 at Baldock and junction 14 at Alconbury, has a large number of at-grade roundabouts, minor side roads (many with central reserve gaps) and direct frontage accesses, often very close to the carriageway. This severely restricts free flow especially at peak periods, and several sections have lower speed limits as a consequence; three of the least reliable sections of the A1 are in this area.
7. The final section included in the study ranges from Alconbury to Peterborough and was opened in 1998. This stretch is designed to a noticeably high standard, eight miles of it being dual four lane whilst the remainder has three lanes in each direction.

Study Objectives

8. The objectives of the A1 East of England Strategic Study are to:
 - assess and form a preliminary strategic case for improving the A1 based on the strategic and economic benefits;
 - define the transport objectives that this ongoing study should seek to identify options for;
 - identify a long-list of options which could meet the transport objectives, and undertake a high level assessment of the potential VFM, benefits and impacts of the different options using (EAST);
 - Short-list the better options to be carried forward;
 - Prepare a Strategic Outline Business Case for the better option(s) for consideration in the development of future RIS.
9. The study will,
 - Consider:
 - Previous studies on the road network in and around the East of England, including the London to Leeds (East) Route Strategy and Evidence Report,
 - Other, similar studies in the East of England and the surrounding areas, including other strategic studies announced in the RIS, and local studies likely to be undertaken in areas on or adjacent to the proposed scheme.
 - Local transport and spatial strategies which are being developed

- Take account of:
 - planned growth in the East of England and the surrounding areas
 - existing investment proposals on both the strategic and local authority road networks, and the traffic impact that a new strategic corridor would have on these existing routes, including the ability of the network to accommodate the level of re-assigned demand created from any new strategic corridor.
 - the impact of commissioned improvement schemes to roads such as the A428, the A1(M) between junctions 6 to 8 and the A14 between Cambridge and Huntingdon; ensuring that study recommendations are compatible with these proposals and that emerging recommendations can be factored into the development of these schemes.
 - committed transport schemes.

GEOGRAPHIC AND MODAL SCOPE

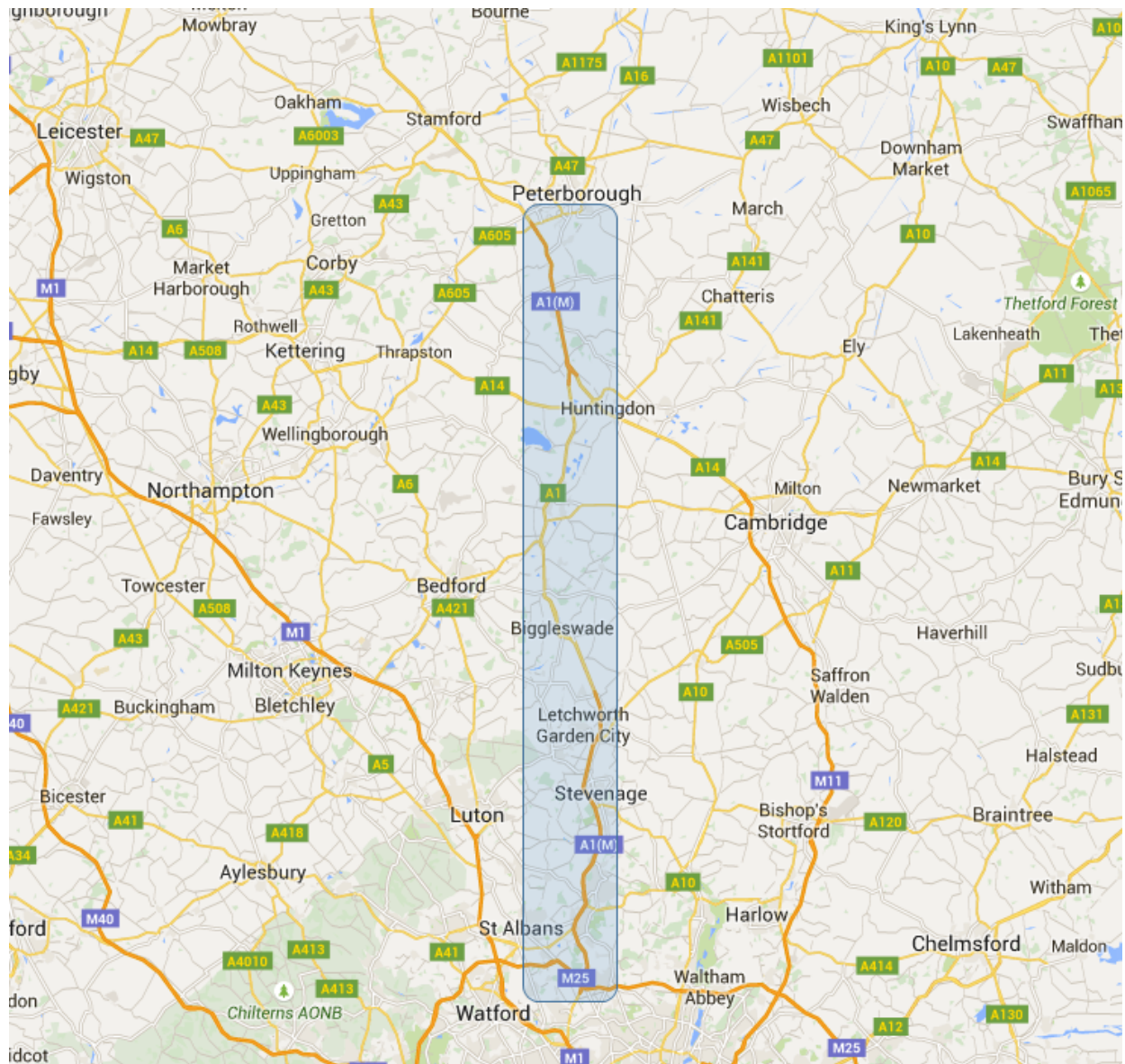
Geographic Scope

10. The geographic scope of the study considers the effects on the A1 corridor between junctions 1 and 17. A map of the proposed approximate geographical scope of the study is included at Figure 1 below.

Modal Scope

11. The main focus of the study is likely to be road-based and will need to understand existing investment proposals on both the strategic and local authority road networks. However the study will need to consider at stage 1 the possibility that other modal solutions can address the strategic objectives of the study (including where either existing infrastructure or planned improvements fulfil some of the studies objectives).

Figure 1



STUDY OUTPUTS AND TIMINGS

Study Stages

12. The study will be completed in three stages which are set out below. The study will be reviewed at the end of stage one to confirm the value of proceeding further and review the scope of the subsequent phases of work.

Task 1: Review of existing evidence and confirm the strategic case for improved connectivity on the A1

13. Review previous study work, other relevant data, and current investment plans to understand current and anticipated future performance and constraints of the transport infrastructure (taking account of committed future improvements), and prepare a preliminary strategic case for considering further investment on the A1 in the East of England.
14. This review should consider the approach set out in Steps 1 to 3 of DfT's 2014 publication Transport Analysis Guidance: The Transport Appraisal Process. Further guidance on preparation of a Strategic Case can be found at https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/85930/dft-transport-business-case.pdf
15. The review should summarise the evidence and information obtained to reach a preliminary view on the strategic and macro-economic benefits for improving the transport corridor between the A1: from where it meets the M25 at J23 to Peterborough at J17. This will involve referencing wider economic evidence including the regional economy in the East of England, labour markets and the current business environment in the region and its sub-regions, community and social factors, and the impacts of the seaports and airports on transport and trade.
16. Existing transport and traffic models will be identified and reviewed in the context of this study and any gaps in modelling information will be reported.

Task 2: Review of existing evidence and confirm the strategic case for improved connectivity on the A1

17. This task should define the transport objectives that will solve the problem identified and identify a long-list of options which could meet the transport objectives.
18. The identification of a long-list of possible improvements should build upon work done in previous studies and identifying any additional options worthy of further consideration. It is assumed that between eight and ten options will be identified at this stage although the Consultant will advise Highways England if it believes that a greater or lesser number of options should be long-listed.

Task 3a: Initial sifting of options

19. This task involves a high level assessment of the different options to discard any options that will not meet the transport objectives nor fit with local, regional, national strategies, or would be highly unlikely to pass key viability and acceptability criteria.
20. Based on the assessment above, the project will identify a short-list of potential options to be carried forward to Task 3b for further development and assessment.

Task 3b: Work to assess the affordability, value for money and deliverability of short-listed potential options

21. The purpose of this task is to document the appraisal of the short-list of better performing potential options to strategic outline business case level.
22. The appraisal transport benefits using the WebTAG methodology and wider economic benefits using an approach consistent with the approach outlined in Transport Investment and Economic Performance Report and the Department for Transport's response together with Understanding and Valuing the Impacts of Transport Investments in addition to the assessment methods required by Highways England's Project Controls Framework (PCF) system.

Deliverables and Milestones

23. The following key milestones will be established for the study. These milestones will be kept under review as the study progresses, and are subject to amendment as and when required.

Deliverables and Milestone	Completion Date
Task 1: Review of existing evidence and confirm the strategic case for improved connectivity on the A1	November 2015
Task 2: Review of existing evidence and confirm the strategic case for improved connectivity on the A1	January 2016
Task 3a: Initial sifting of options	April 2016
Task 3b: Work to assess the affordability, value for money and deliverability of short-listed potential options	October 2016.

GOVERNANCE OF THE STUDY

24. Proposed governance arrangements for all six studies are summarised below.

Sponsor – Department for Transport

25. The sponsor will chair the Programme Boards and Project Boards, with appropriate delegated authority for making decisions on behalf of the study to enable decisions to be made by either **Programme Board** or the **Project Boards**.

26. These representatives will also be responsible for ensuring that the outputs at each stage meet Sponsor / Client requirements.

Senior Responsible Owner

27. The workstream lead for the study will be Paul Hersey, Senior Policy Lead at the Department for Transport.

28. The workstream lead will:

- Chair the Project Board;
- Deal with issues as they arise requiring their advice, decision-making and communication with senior stakeholders;
- Ensure that stakeholders agree on the definition of outputs to be delivered, and the definition of their delivery;
- Provide high-level scrutiny of risk, taking responsibility for risk and issue mitigation and management if required.

Study Programme Boards

29. Overall direction for this and the other five Strategic Studies will be provided by one of two Programme Boards. One programme board will consider the studies covered by the Transport of the North area (the Northern Trans-Pennine, the Trans-Pennine Tunnel and the M60 North West Quadrant studies) whilst governance of the remaining studies (M25 South West Quadrant, the Oxford to Cambridge Expressway and the A1 East of England studies) will be provided by a separate board. This arrangement will ensure that membership of the programme board does not contain representatives with no authority for all of the relevant study areas. In practice, these boards will meet sequentially and share a large amount of resources,

30. The role of the Programme Boards will be to:

- Provide strategic direction for the programme of studies and monitor key milestones;
- Monitor/validate progress against plan and review significant risks and issues;
- Decide on the frequency and level of detail to be reported to Ministers;
- Provide advice to project managers regarding issues that arise as part of the individual studies;
- Review and approve the study outputs; and
- Take account of analytical assurance provided by the Future Roads Analytical Group.

31. Both Programme Boards will be led by the Sponsor; DfT will be represented by a Director supported by the study workstream lead.

32. The other members of both Programme Boards will include:

- RIS Futures Deputy Director
- RIS Client Deputy Director

- Highways England Strategy and Planning
- Future Roads Analytical Group
- Strategic Communications
- Study workstream lead

33. The Northern Studies Programme Board will also include a representative(s) from Transport for the North.

34. The Study Sponsor will agree the content of recommendations to Ministers arising from this study.

Study Project Board

35. The *Project Board* will provide strategic oversight to the study and will confirm that the terms of reference for the study are being addressed in the delivery of the *Services*. It will be chaired by the Paul Hersey, and will include other representatives from, the Department for Transport and Highways England. The Consultant's project manager and project director will attend the Project Board.

Stakeholder Reference Group

36. Given the broad range of stakeholder interests in the studies, each study has developed a stakeholder engagement strategy to support the delivery of the each of the project stages. As part of this engagement strategy a 'reference group' will be established. The group will meet regularly as the study progresses.

37. The main role of the reference group will be to ensure stakeholders' views are captured and considered during the study process, particularly at key points in the study's work and at times of the development of key outputs.

38. The establishment of the reference group will allow stakeholder organisations to be aware and feed into the work of the study and allow representation from other organisations.

39. The membership of the reference group will be confirmed at the end of stage 1 of the study, and is likely to include LEPs, local authorities (including planning authorities), environmental NGOs, other transport operators and infrastructure providers, and business interest groups. The membership of this group will be kept under review as the study progresses to ensure that it continues to capture stakeholder views throughout the study process.

Figure 2

