

The A14 Challenge



Finding Solutions Together

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Department for Transport
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London SW1P 4DR
Telephone 0300 330 3000
Website www.dft.gov.uk

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Foreword

The Challenge generated a wide spectrum of constructive and innovative ideas for improving the A14. A number of key themes have emerged. These can be broadly grouped together as improvements to public transport, freight and the road network. The roll that technology can play in improving conditions on the A14, and options for funding and financing have also emerged as key considerations.

This document summarises the ideas that we have received. It also explains how we have taken account of these ideas, and will continue to develop them, in progressing the A14 Study in partnership with local delivery agencies.

1. The A14 Challenge

- 1.1** In partnership with Cambridgeshire, Suffolk and Northamptonshire County Councils, we launched the [A14 Challenge](#) last December. Its purpose was to generate ideas for providing long term, affordable and deliverable solutions to reduce congestion and improve safety and resilience on the A14 between Ellington and Fen Ditton, thereby enhancing the performance of this strategically important corridor.
- 1.2** A [report](#) published to inform the Challenge exercise provided details about the problems experienced on the A14. It identified how these impact on growth, prosperity and quality of life for those across the country as well as those in the immediate Cambridgeshire area. The linkages between these issues are shown in the matrix below:

Figure 1.1: Challenge matrix

Transport Problems	Wider Challenges						
	Supporting Economic Growth				Impact on quality of life (Social % Environmental impacts)		
	Lost productive time	Supporting growth in the wider UK economy	Supporting growth of Greater Cambridge	Access to labour markets	Quality of life/welfare	Accidents	Air Quality (Health) & Noise
Peak congestion and delay on A14							
Peak congestion and delay on key local roads							
Lack of resilience							
Safety							

Based on Steer Davies Gleave (December 2011) Figure 6.1

Reproduced from Atkins (February 2012) A14 Study Output 2 (2A Report). Option generation and initial sifting Table 1.

- 1.3** We used this as a starting point for a rapid, wide ranging, multi-media consultation exercise to gather views about what can be done to improve the A14. We provided a web based platform for people to send their views to us and asked for views by email or by letter too. We attended the events organised by the county councils along the route which provided a valuable opportunity to hear views first hand.
- 1.4** This document summarises findings from the Challenge and sets out the Government's response to what you told us.

2. Who responded?

- 2.1** The Challenge exercise finished at the end of January and has been a resounding success. Thank you to all who participated and sent views to us!
- 2.2** We received 230 responses in total - 101 via the website and a further 129 via emails and letters.
- 2.3** The Challenge captured a diverse cross section of views from commuters who rely on the A14 to get to and from work, people who live near to the A14, as well as businesses located or with interests or holdings close to the A14. We also received views from the business sector, local authorities, parish councils, environmental bodies, organisations representing the interests of motorists and public transport users, leading players within the rail freight industry and the commercial operator of the Haven ports.

Figure 2.1: Northamptonshire County Council engagement event



- 2.4** Challenge events to gather ideas for improving the A14 were also held by the three county councils along the route, attracting a range of interests and substantial input to the process.

3. More sustainable choices

- 3.1** Public transport was identified as having an important role to play in reducing congestion on the A14 and a number of ideas were put forward for improving the public transport offer in Cambridgeshire.
- 3.2** Some people thought that improved cycling facilities could be provided to link urban areas with outlying villages along the A14, and to make cycling into Cambridge more attractive.
- 3.3** Others identified that commuters could be encouraged to make smarter choices about how they travel to work if non-car options were marketed more widely. Several people highlighted that car sharing and travel planning could play an important role in giving people more options for travelling to work and workplace, retail and leisure facility travel planning were all identified as being important. Responses also suggested that business in Cambridgeshire could be encouraged to support employees to work from home.

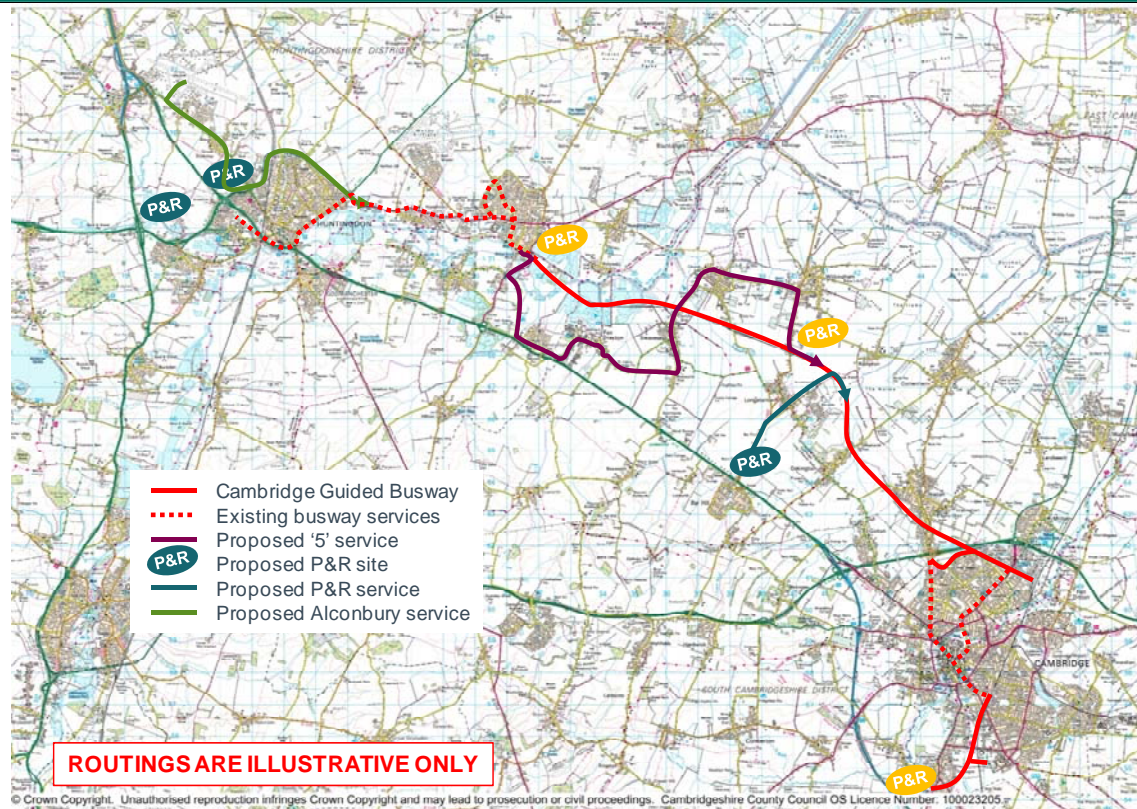
Local bus services

- 3.4** Bus services were seen as having significant potential to alter travel patterns and reduce use of the A14. Ideas sent to us included suggestions for local bus services to be increased and for new services to be provided to employment centres, railway stations, park and ride sites and the Guided Busway.

The Guided Busway and new park and ride sites

- 3.5** The Cambridgeshire Guided Busway opened in 2011. It connects Huntingdon with Trumpington (to the south of Cambridge) via St Ives and Cambridge city centre. The route is 25 miles long. Guided sections account for 16 miles, with remaining sections proceeding on local roads:

Figure 3.2: Draft public transport package



Reproduced from Atkins (May 2012) A14 Study Output 2 (2B/2C Report):
Options recommended for further assessment Figure 5

- 3.8** To support the development of the Busway, the park and ride at St Ives, will be doubled in size from 500 to 1,000 spaces. Works are planned to begin later this year.
- 3.9** We have also listened to the suggestions made about the potential for a new park and ride site near Huntingdon and are exploring the merits of doing this. As responses to the Challenge have identified, there are a number of possible locations for a new site. Moving forwards we will therefore consider which site might capture the largest market. Alconbury Enterprise Zone to the north west of Huntingdon, which could provide thousands of new jobs and homes, may be one such location:

Figure 3.3: The Alconbury Enterprise Zone

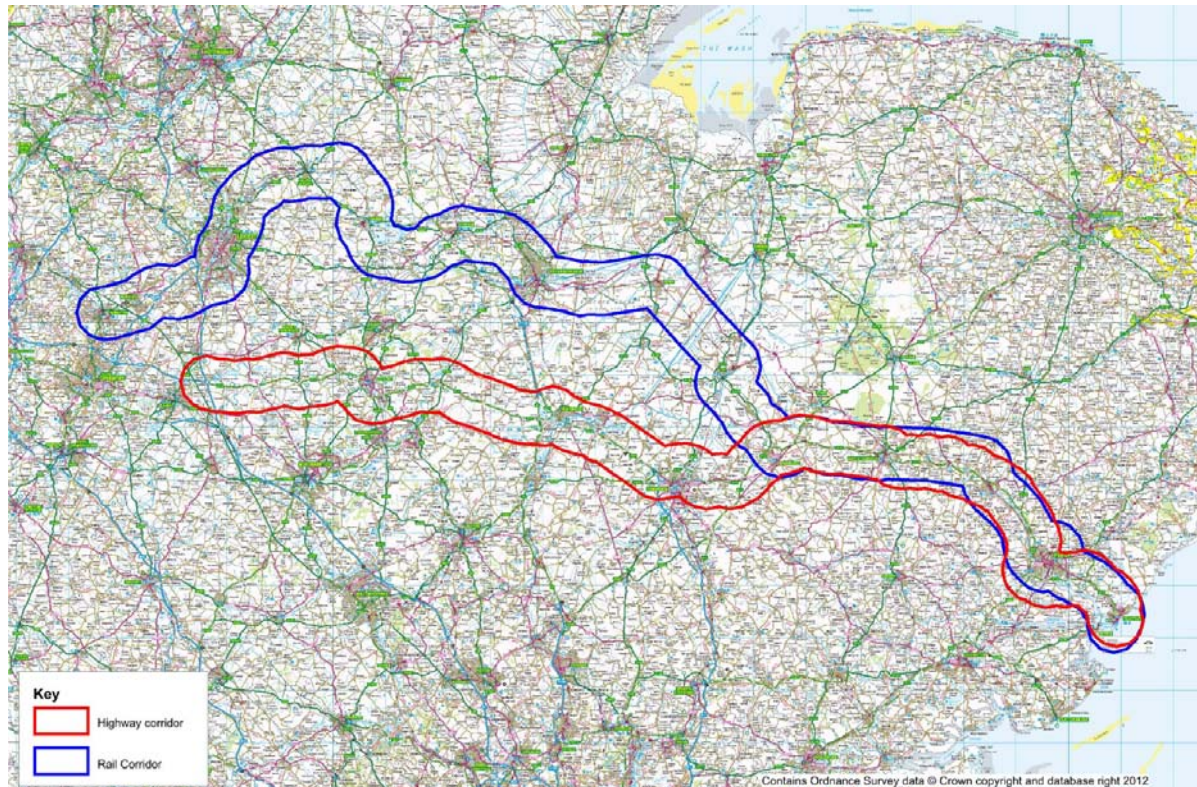


- 3.10** We are also considering whether a new park and ride site closer to Cambridge would be viable and would be effective in intercepting traffic that would otherwise use the A14 to continue into Cambridge.

4. Moving freight

- 4.1** We also heard concerns about congestion caused by freight being carried by heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) on the A14, with respondents identifying opportunities for more freight to be carried by rail to reduce this congestion.
- 4.2** The Port of Felixstowe is the UK's largest and busiest container port, handling 2.07 million containers during 2010. Planning permission has also been granted for a new container port at Bathside Bay, Harwich.
- 4.3** Responses to the Challenge suggested that the proportion of containers moved out of Felixstowe by rail could be increased, from around 25% now, to the levels of rail market share currently achieved at Southampton.
- 4.4** Significant scope was identified to increase the proportion of freight hauled by rail if investment continues to be made to upgrade the Felixstowe to Nuneaton (F2N) rail line, which links the port facilities at Felixstowe with the Midlands, the North West, North East and Scotland. The F2N line is marked in blue on the drawing below, with the A14 marked in red:

Figure 4.1: route of the Felixstowe to Nuneaton rail line and the A14



Reproduced from Atkins (February 2012) A14 Study output 2 (2A Report): Option generation and initial sifting Appendix A

4.5 Some Phase 1 capacity improvements to the F2N line have already been made.

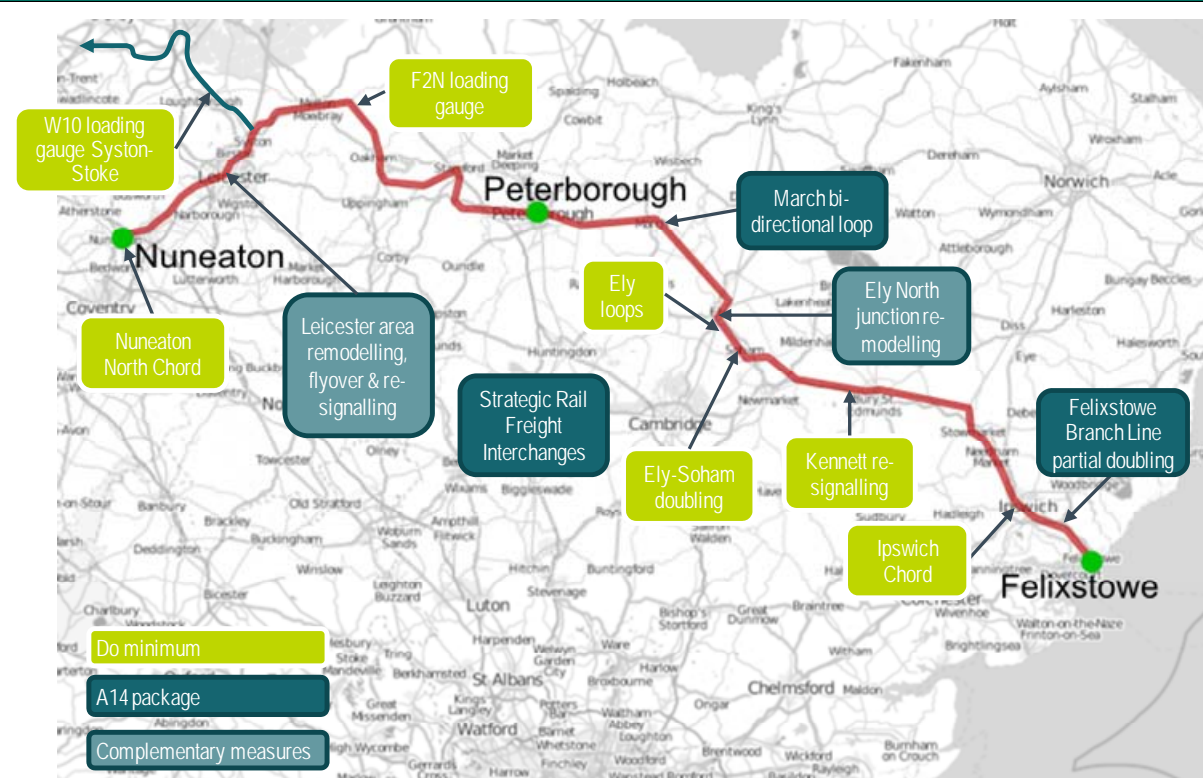
4.6 In addition to this, the Government announced in the Autumn Statement made last November that it was making funds available to allow delivery of two elements of the remaining Phase 2 scheme:

- Loading gauge Syston Stoke: enhancements between Syston (north of Leicester and Stoke) to enable larger freight containers favoured by shippers to be carried on standard wagons; and
- Ely Soham double tracking: a scheme to remove a bottleneck on this part of the network.

4.7 The responses we received from the rail freight industry in particular recommended that further government enhancement funding is made available for the next rail investment period of 2014-19 and that this

funding could be used by the rail industry to deliver the remaining Phase 2 upgrades.

Figure 4.2: draft freight package



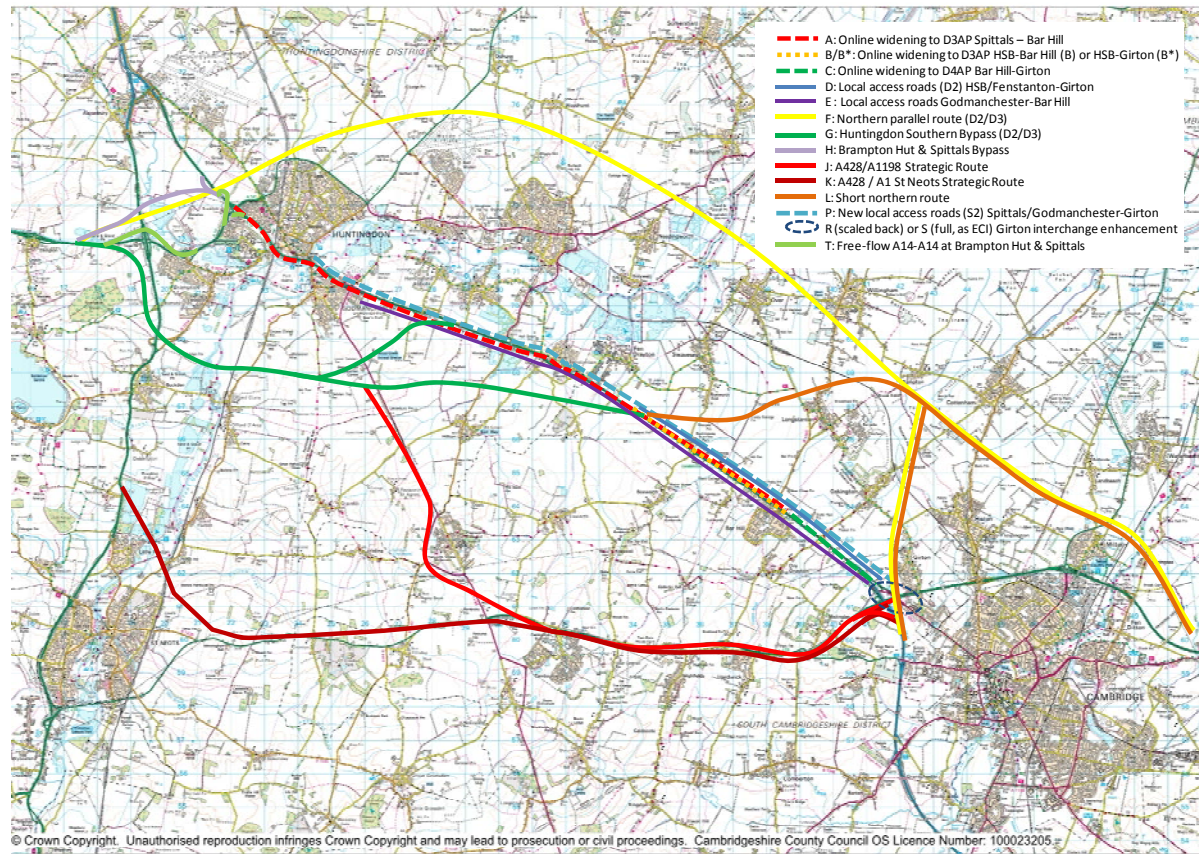
Reproduced from Atkins (May 2012) A14 Study Output 2 (2B/2C Report): Options recommended for further assessment Figure 6

- 4.8** We are testing a package of freight improvement measures that we think, in combination with the F2N Phase 1 and Phase 2 works, could double the number of freight trains that can access Felixstowe from the existing 29 trains per day to 56 trains per day by 2030.
- 4.9** Ministers are currently considering the funding that can be made available for rail enhancements within the five year control period from 2014-19 and the extent to which funds might be made available to the freight operators to direct to the areas of greatest freight requirement. They will publish a High Level Output Specification by July this year which will set this out.

5. Improving the road network

- 5.1** The largest number of ideas for improving the performance of the A14 was related to the road network and covered a wide range of issues. These ranged from small scale improvements aimed at enhancing safety to ideas for comprehensive network upgrades through to the provision of extra lanes on the A14 and proposals for new relief roads to provide alternative routes for traffic that currently uses the A14.
- 5.2** In November's Autumn Statement, the Chancellor announced a £20m package of immediate improvements to the A14 around Cambridge. The package includes measures to improve the layout, road markings and signage at Girton and Spittals, which will reduce queuing and delays, and improve traffic circulation at these junctions.
- 5.3** A need for better real time information for drivers was identified in a number of responses. Suggestions included providing variable message signs, and extending the A14 technology project to cover the A14 between Ellington and Fen Ditton, providing more webcams with feeds to local radio and the Highways Agency and local authority websites. Some respondents suggested that technology could also play a part in speeding up dealing with incidents. The £20m package we are developing will provide better information to motorists, and will allow the detection of incidents more quickly.
- 5.4** Many of the responses to the A14 Challenge drew attention to the different functions that the A14 performs between Ellington and Fen Ditton. It was observed that the A14 carried significant volumes of movements east/west, north/south movements and locally and put forwards ideas for separating these flows to varying extents.

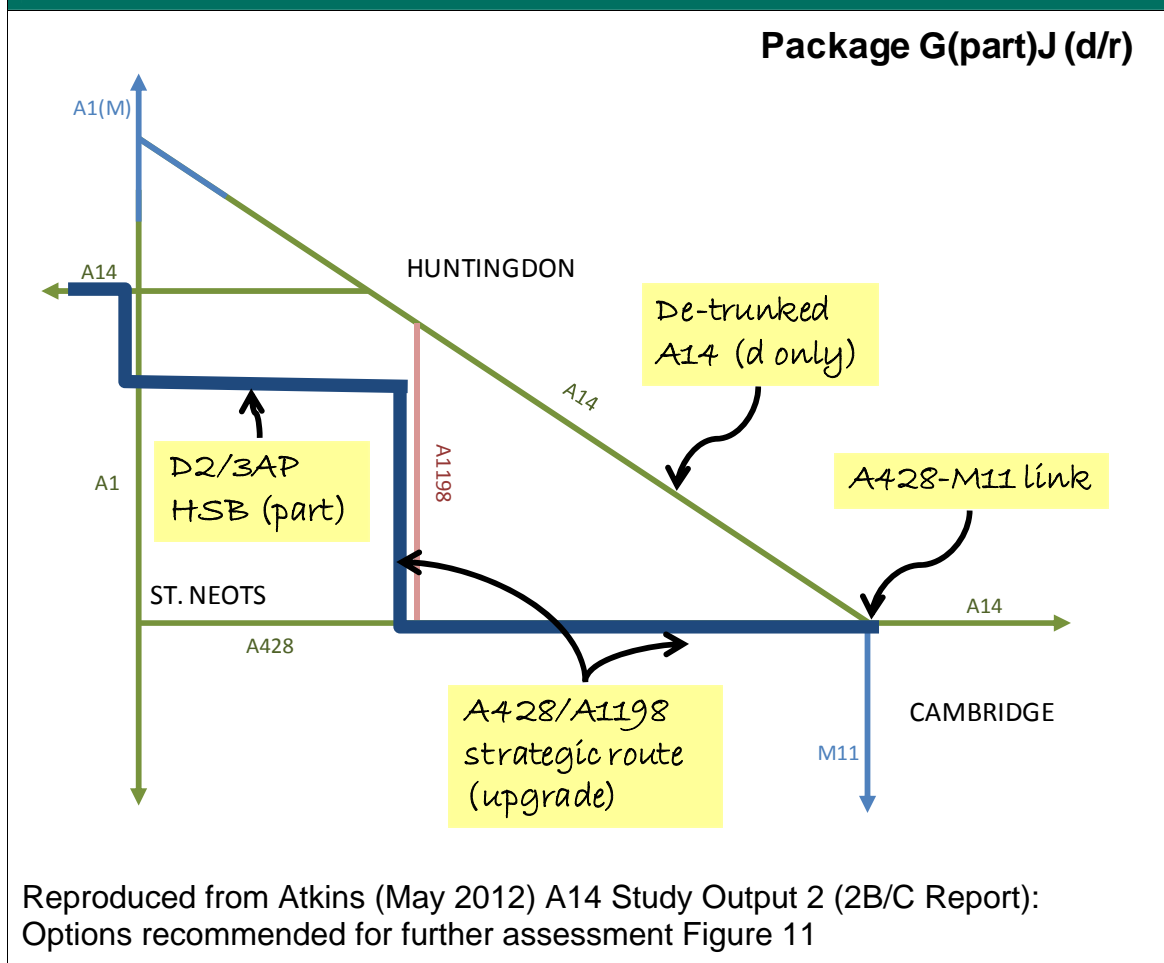
Figure 5.1: road improvements considered for initial assessment



Reproduced from Atkins (2012) working drawing

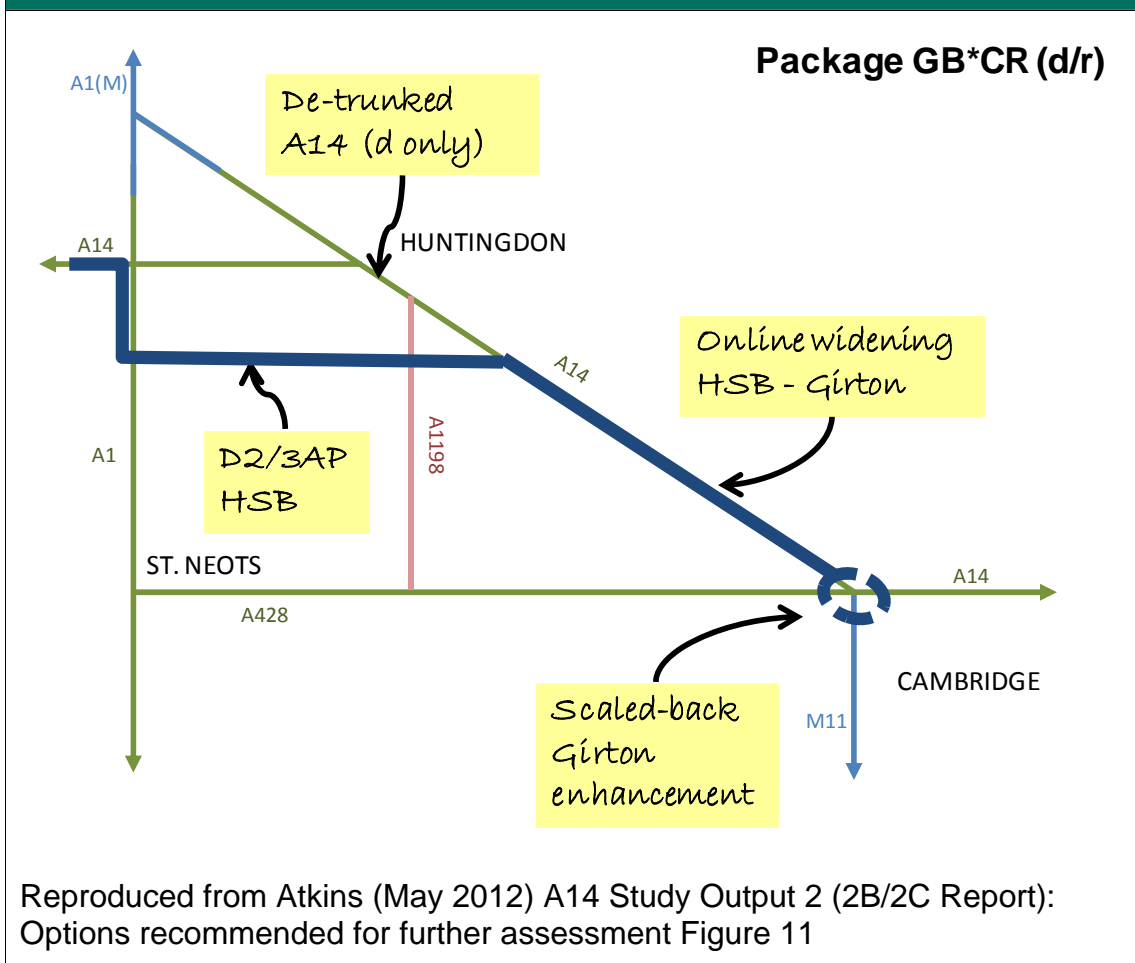
5.5 We have considered a wide range of potential enhancements to the A14 and the A428, as well as a range of new road alignments. Our assessment so far has identified six highway packages that have the potential to address the challenges of the existing road. Examples, of some of the six highway packages that we have shortlisted for further assessment, and which are provided for illustrative purposes only, are shown below:

Figure 5.2: example illustrative draft highway package



- 5.6** This short list offers choices about whether to improve the A428 east-west route and its ties into the strategic road network or upgrading the existing A14. These packages also offer options for partial or phased improvements of the corridor.

Figure 5.3: example illustrative draft highway package



- 5.7** We will assess the merits of these six broad options during the weeks ahead and will also carefully consider the scope for road improvements to be part-funded through tolling.
- 5.8** We are considering how to make best use of existing roads as part of this process. That includes looking at how options that use existing assets compare with options providing more new infrastructure. For example, the future of the Huntingdon Viaduct will be a major consideration in the design of any options to improve the road.

6. Next Steps

- 6.1** The A14 Challenge has helped us to identify packages of improvements that could be made across the modes.
- 6.2** We will now assess the packages we have identified in further detail to understand what each can deliver, and the impacts of multi-modal improvements. The Challenge responses will help us identify complementary measures that can be incorporated to optimise these packages.
- 6.3** We plan to have completed this work by July, and plan to publish the results of this analysis soon after.