

A141 and St Ives Improvements Study: Joint Response from County Councillors for St Ives and surrounding villages

Sent via email to TalkA141@cambridgeshire.gov.uk on 14 November 2025. Parish Councils and District Councillors covering the county council divisions in copy.

This letter is a joint and cross-party response from the three County Councillors whose divisions are most directly affected by the proposed "A141 and St Ives Improvement Scheme". We have each received a significant number of communications from residents expressing concern about both the content of the proposals and the process by which they have been presented. We have also attended the in-person consultations in St Ives and have seen the strength of feeling from residents on these proposals.

Our response highlights three key areas of concern:

1. **The substance of the proposed scheme itself;**
2. **The quality and delivery of the presentation and public engagement; and**
3. **The decision-making and consultation process surrounding its development.**

1. The Scheme Itself

There are several specific elements of the scheme that cause serious concern for our residents:

Bus Gate: We fail to see how this will improve traffic flow. It will instead force residents living off Needingworth Road to take much longer routes along already congested roads during peak hours.

No Right Turn Restrictions: These proposals are unworkable, particularly given the location of the builders' merchant at the top of Needingworth Road. The restriction would divert large delivery vehicles and HGVs onto Needingworth Road – a narrow residential street with a nursery, church, and mosque—creating significant safety risks. This "no right turn" proposal has appeared in two previous consultations, and each time local councillors have explained why it will not work. It is deeply frustrating that this local feedback has not been retained or considered.

Additional Lane on Harrison Way: This would simply move the bottleneck further down the road toward the busway crossing, worsening existing congestion rather than alleviating it.

Proposed Cycleway Across the Meadow: This route floods during the winter months and is inaccessible for much of the year. It is already a viable option in summer, but it cannot function as a year-round commuter route.

We support the proposed new bus routes, particularly the one connecting to the railway station and Hinchbrook Hospital; however, these routes do not fully meet the needs of the town. Since 2019, a significantly higher number of residents have been travelling to Huntingdon and Cambridge to attend regional colleges. The current bus services are insufficient and overcrowded during morning and evening peak times, as they are heavily used by commuters. In addition, they do not provide adequate local collection within the town. It is also difficult to assess the sustainability of the new proposed bus routes, without having the wider context on whether franchising will be implemented given current delays, or whether these routes would operate purely on a commercial model.

2. Presentation and Public Engagement

The presentation of the scheme made it extremely difficult for residents – and indeed councillors – to fully understand the proposals. The scale of the maps and quality of visual materials, particularly those available online, were inadequate. Supporting evidence was notably absent, making it difficult to justify any of the new changes to the previously consulted scheme.

The FAQ and summary documents referred repeatedly to data and traffic models that were neither made publicly available online nor accessible during the public session. For residents and councillors to meaningfully evaluate the scheme and its claims, it is essential that all underlying data and models are available in the public domain.

At the Corn Exchange drop-in on 23 October 2025, which was attended by around 1,200 residents, it was clear that some staff were poorly briefed and overwhelmed by the scale of public interest. We understand that much of the data being referenced dates back to around 2015 and, for Harrison Way, 2019—both pre-COVID. Given how substantially work patterns and traffic flows have changed since 2019, this reliance on outdated data is not acceptable and does not command trust in the process from residents or councillors.

Additionally, the rerouting of the A14 at the end of 2019 has led to St Ives being used as a “rat run” for HGVs from the A141 seeking to avoid the longer route via Huntingdon to rejoin the A14 eastbound. This has caused a marked increase in HGV traffic through the town, yet no recent data appears to have been collected to quantify or address this.

Other key local factors have not been considered, including:

- High lunchtime traffic flows to local eateries and supermarkets;
- The impact of flooding at Earith, which significantly alters local traffic patterns; and
- Severe congestion caused by the guided busway crossing, which creates backflows in the mornings and long queues in the evenings, stretching almost to the old A14.

Therefore, the proposed model fails to address these critical pinch points and may, in fact, exacerbate them.

3. Decision-Making and Consultation

There appears to have been little or no engagement with ward councillors or use of local knowledge during the development of the scheme. This lack of consultation has contributed directly to public anger and frustration, as seen at the drop-in sessions in St Ives. Meaningful collaboration with local representatives and community groups could have prevented many of these issues and produced a more credible, locally informed proposal.

Our Recommendations

To develop a viable improvement plan, we recommend the following to be implemented, before the scheme progresses any further.

Updated Data Collection:

- Conduct new traffic surveys reflecting post-COVID work patterns;

- Include peak, lunchtime, and flood-affected conditions;
- Gather data on HGV volumes using St Ives as a through-route from the A141 to the A14.

Strategic Review:

- Integrate planning for the significant new housing and commercial developments in this part of Huntingdonshire, including RAF Wyton and the Local Plan sites; re-assess the business case for a full bypass north of St Ives rather than half a bypass only from Huntingdon to Wyton;
- Revisit the previously discussed additional river crossing option, potentially at Hartford Marina, which remains essential to long-term traffic relief.

Targeted Infrastructure Improvements:

- We suggest considering the construction of a footbridge at the guided busway crossing to improve pedestrian safety and maintain traffic flow. Most of the delays at this crossing are caused by pedestrians rather than buses. Additionally, the long light phases often result in pedestrians crossing before the signals change, increasing the risk of accidents and further disrupting traffic movement.
- Introduce an HGV weight limit, with access-only exceptions for local deliveries and enforcement via cameras;
- The cycle paths between St Ives, Huntingdon and Godmanchester. That improvements and joining up existing paths plus the creation of a cycle path from RAF Wyton / Wyton on the Hill via Mere Way and Sawtry Way would be more effective than the proposed 2 options across open meadow and pasture land.

Conclusion

The current "A141 and St Ives Improvement Scheme," as proposed, will not resolve the town's traffic challenges and may in some respects worsen them. An effective and sustainable solution must be based on up-to-date data, strategic foresight, and genuine local consultation.

We urge the project team to pause the current process and establish a working group involving local councillors, residents' representatives, and community organisations such as Roadwatch to co-develop a more informed and workable plan.

Yours faithfully,

Cllr Alex Bulat

(St Ives South and Needingworth)



Cllr Julie Kerr

(St Ives North and Wyton)



Cllr David Keane

(Hemingfords and Fenstanton)



On behalf of residents of St Ives and the surrounding villages.