



Local plan Central Bedfordshire Plan – consultation on Additional Evidence -June 2020

Technical Paper Exam 114

M1 Junction 13

I am writing regarding the proposals for M1 junction 13 which has been revised for the latest submission and detailed in Technical Paper Exam 114

I have 2 specific points;

- 1. The traffic proposals agreed with Highways England on Junction 13 of the M1 and the proposals themselves are flawed.
- 2. CBC cannot be relied on to deliver infrastructure, with specific reference to the Milton Keynes to Bedford waterway proposals as an example.

My reasoning is;

The modelling used for the traffic flow mitigation measures in Document Exam 114b appears to be flawed.

The model used for traffic forecasts is included Transport Modelling Stage 1B.

Paragraph 2.3.1 states the analysis includes;

‘Any change between 2016 and 2035 which could potentially impact the number of trips, trip patterns and travel behaviours e.g.:
– Changes to the transport infrastructure, for both highways and Public Transport.’

[Central Bedfordshire Council Local Plan(2015-2035) Transport Modelling Stage 1B, https://centralbedfordshire.oc2.uk/docfiles/24/transport_modelling_stage_1b.pdf , on-line, accessed 8/8/2020]

Scenario 1a included in the modelling stage 1b and is designed to take the possible Oxford to Cambridge Expressway route. In figure 13, M1 Junction 13 is identified as Hotspot 10a;

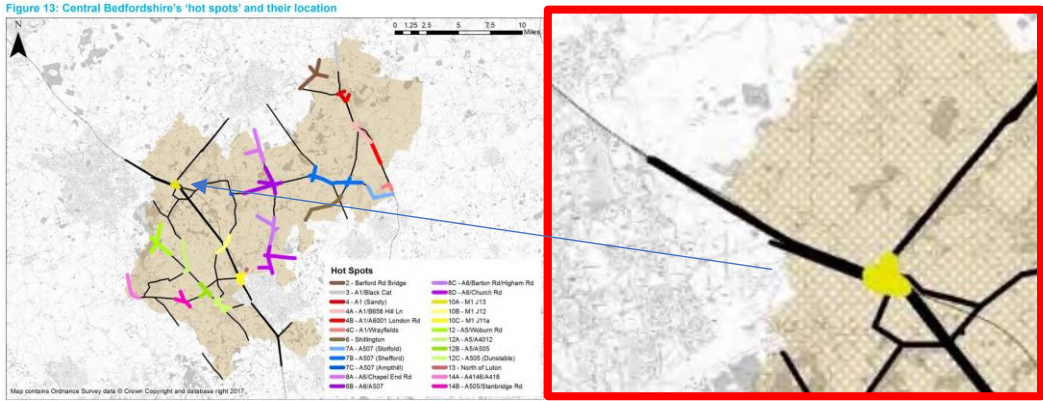
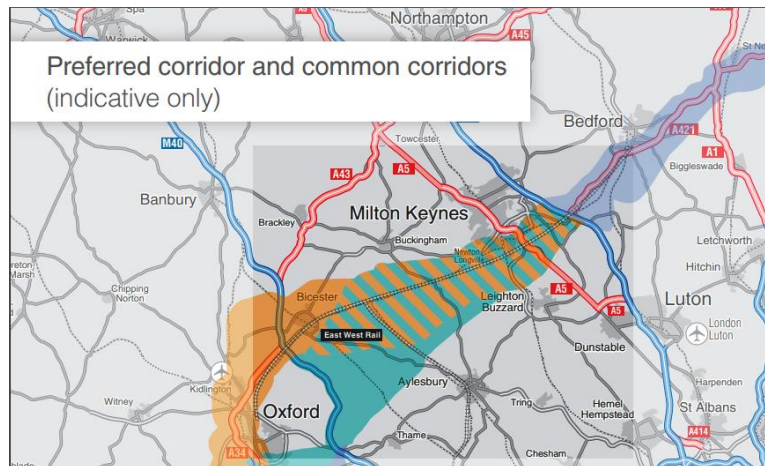


Figure 13 clearly shows the existing road network.

The preferred corridor for the Oxford / Cambridge Expressway uses the A421 East of Milton Keynes. This is the map taken from Highways England website essentially following the East West Rail corridor;



[Highways England, <http://assets.highwaysengland.co.uk/roads/road-projects/Oxford+to+Cambridge+expressway/Map2+Preferred+and+common+corridors.pdf>, on-line, 2019, accessed 2/8/20]

The Expressway will significantly alter the east – west traffic flow so it is right that it is included in the traffic forecasts.

Despite this, CBC planning seems to assume that the Expressway traffic will approach M1 junction 13 along the A421 from the Eagle Farm roundabout.

Document Exam 114c Transport Technical paper proposes several traffic mitigation measures for junction 13 of the M1. Their locations are summarised in the red squares in Figure 3-1

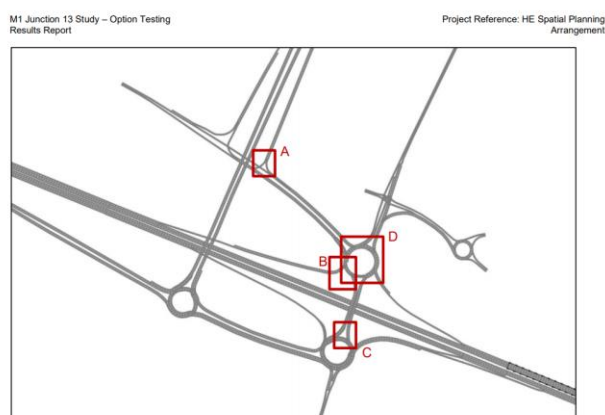


Figure 3-1. Location of the potential interventions

[Central Bedfordshire Council, M1 Junction 13 Study, <https://centralbedfordshire.app.box.com/s/0eesh9ilrbap8uau5zb0a4phdxx70d9u>, on-line, accessed 6/8/20]

There are no new roads shown, or any proposal for how the proposed expressway would join the A421 at this point.

There is only one logical place where the Oxford to Cambridge Expressway will join the existing A421 east of Milton Keynes. M1 Junction 13. It will not be an Expressway if it uses the existing A421 through Milton Keynes. This is clear from the Highways England Strategic Outline Business Case. Figure 2.4 showing 'existing constraints';

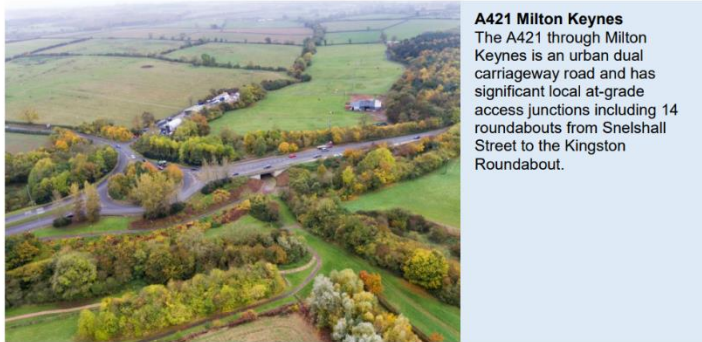


Figure 2-4 Existing Constraints on the Primary East-West Route: A421 Milton Keynes

[Highways England, Oxford to Cambridge Expressway Strategic Outline Business Case, p.22 <http://assets.highwaysengland.co.uk/roads/road-projects/Oxford+to+Cambridge+expressway/STRATEGIC+OUTLINE+BUSINESS+CASE.pdf>, on-line, accessed 9/8/2020]

This results with the possibility of either a major change in the traffic flow at the junction. The red arrow below shows a likely point where the expressway would join

M1 Junction 13 Study – Option Testing Results Report Project Reference: HE Spatial Planning Arrangement

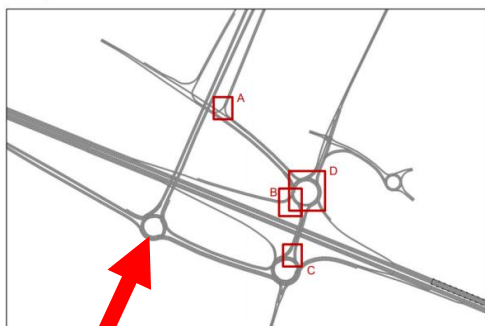


Figure 3-1. Location of the potential interventions

It is possible, that the existing roundabout could be bypassed completely, with a graded junction, but also likely that traffic will use the expressway rather than M40/M25/M1 route as it may currently do.

This means that my opinion is that the mitigation proposals by Central Bedfordshire are inadequate.

On a related note, I have been unable to find how CBC expects traffic to be affected in the areas of Cranfield & Salford caused by 'rat running' to avoid queues at M1 junction 13 during peak times.

My second related point is regarding delivery of infrastructure and my lack of trust in Central Bedfordshire Council to deliver. I want to look specifically at the proposed Milton Keynes to Bedford Waterway. Whilst this may seem to be unconnected to the A421, the two are linked, and I propose to use this specific item to show how Central Bedfordshire Council cannot be relied on to provide long term infrastructure improvements to an appropriate level.

The proposals for the waterway were first put forward 25 years ago in 1995.

On their website, Central Bedfordshire Council states.

'the Bedford and Milton Keynes Waterway Park (the B&MK for short) ; 'will connect the Grand Union Canal at Milton Keynes with the Great Ouse river at Bedford...Britain's first major new waterway in a century'

[Central Bedfordshire Council, https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/info/67/developments/12/bedford_and_milton_keynes_waterways, on-line, accessed 3/8/2020]

In the pre-submission Local plan, Policy EE10: The Bedford & Milton Keynes Waterway Park it states;

'Development that would adversely affect the implementation of the Waterway Park, or that does not provide accommodation for the Waterway and associated infrastructure will not be permitted.

[Central Bedfordshire Council, Central Bedfordshire Council pre-submission Local Plan, p.200, 2018]

The A421 dual carriageway link between the current A421 junction near to junction 13 of the M1 and the Eagle Farm roundabout is being constructed across the route of the proposed Milton Keynes to Bedford Waterway. When the construction of the dual carriageway A421 between M1 junction 13 and Bedford was completed in 2009, a culvert was built under the road to protect the route.

The new dual carriageway under construction crosses another part of the proposed route of the waterway. CBC is aware of the waterway proposals as it is a member of the Bedford and Milton Keynes Waterway Consortium.

[Central Bedfordshire Council, https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/info/67/developments/12/bedford_and_milton_keynes_waterways , on-line, accessed 3/8/2020]

In the minutes of the CBC Executive Committee meeting 10/10/2017, minute E/17/61, relating to the award of the contract for the construction of the A421 Dualling, M1/J13 to Milton Keynes, Magna Park stated that the contract would be awarded.

It further states; 'In response to a question, the Director of Community Services explained that the waterway route would be protected, but that the works did not include the construction of the culvert.'

[Central Bedfordshire Council, <https://centralbeds.moderngov.co.uk/documents/g5371/Printed%20minutes%20Tuesday%2010-Oct-2017%2009.30%20EXECUTIVE.pdf?T=1>, on-line, accessed 3/8/20]

There is no detail of how the route is to be protected, given the considerable addition cost that would be required to either dig under the new road, or provide an alternative method of providing a waterway across the new dual carriageway section of the A421.

It is appreciated that the new A421 dual carriageway crosses into Milton Keynes at the point that the waterway is supposed to cross it, but Central Bedfordshire Council has project managed a road scheme that directly contradicts its own policy EE10 that is in the local plan. If Central Bedfordshire Council cannot even follow its own policies, how can there be any confidence that it will deliver on the infrastructure promises it is making regarding the M1 junction 13.

The Inland Waterways Association reported on 27/4/2018 that the the Waterways Trust ;

'the Council (Central Bedfordshire Council) has asked B&MKWT to pay £150,000 within 3 weeks to fund the design costs for the culvert which wasn't included in their original designs.'

[Inland Waterways Association, <https://www.waterways.org.uk/news/view?id=356>, on-line, accessed 8/8/2020]

The BBC further reported that the Bedford to Milton Keynes waterway trust was given an 'impossible task' to find £3 million to fund the culvert under the new A421 in a short space of time.

[BBC, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-beds-bucks-herts-44039968>, on-line, accessed 3/8/2020]

It is unlikely that the Waterway Trust will be able to raise the additional funding without a long delay in the Milton Keynes to Bedford Waterway project, which Central Bedfordshire Council promotes as a supporting reason for housing in the Marston Vale. Without the completion of the waterway they is no environmentally friendly route between the new Marston Vale proposed development and Milton Keynes.

I also note, as Narrowboat World reported in 2017; 'the proposed link between the Gran Union Canal & River Great Ouse has now been downgraded & named the Bedford & Milton Keynes Waterway Park...So no longer is it the Bedford and Milton Keynes Waterway Trust, but the Bedford and Milton Keynes Waterway Park—a walking and cycling route now used to further the building of houses along what was to be the waterway corridor.'

[<https://narrowboatworld.com/10357-the-link-is-now-a-park>, 2017, on-line, accessed 8/8/2020]

The renaming seems a subtle change, but it is a very significant deviation in the intent.

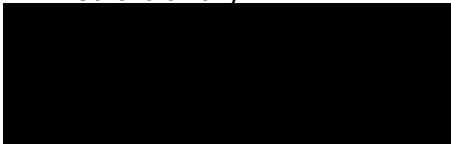
The A421 extension blocking the route of the waterway, despite minutes stating the route would be protected shows that CBC cannot be relied on to deliver major infrastructure projects. Furthermore, whilst it is appreciated that the new A421 dual carriageway crosses into Milton Keynes at the point that the waterway is supposed to cross it, however Central Bedfordshire Council has project managed a road scheme that directly contradicts its own local plan policy EE10. If Central Bedfordshire Council cannot even follow its own policies, how can there be any confidence that it will deliver on the infrastructure promises it is making regarding the M1 junction 13

In summary;

the traffic modelling in Document Exam 114a/b is flawed because it does not appear to properly model the Oxford to Cambridge Expressway.

The A421 dual carriageway extension blocking the Milton Keynes to Bedford Waterway by a project managed by Central Bedfordshire shows that Central Bedfordshire Council cannot follow its own policies properly or be relied on to deliver long term infrastructure improvements reliably. This demonstrates that the proposals in Document 114a/b cannot be trusted either.

Yours faithfully



John Savill.