



Revisiting 1994 route may be way forward for the A1

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This was the potential route of an improved A1 between Wyboston and Brampton that was scrapped 20 years ago but could be revisited as part of new plans to upgrade the dual carriageway.

More than 25 years ago, the Government announced the A1 was a "road to prosperity" and made a "road to prosperity" investigation. It investigated ways to make a stretch between Baldock and St Neots, where there are five roundabouts, into a motorway.

In 1994, the Highways Agency held a public consultation which showed the proposed route which runs to the west of the existing road, and Roxton, Wyboston, between Staploe and Duloe, west of Hail Weston, Southoe and Hardwick before rejoining the route south of the Brampton Hut roundabout.

The route would have fewer junctions than currently, which would be restricted to Brampton Hut and where the new route would intersect the A421 to Bedford.

It was scrapped from the roads programme in 1995, but last month Transport Secretary Patrick McLoughlin and Chief Secretary to the Treasury Danny Alexander revealed a strategic study would look into the future of the A1 between Peterborough and the M25.

To help convince the Government the improvement is needed, Jonathan Djanogly, MP for Huntingdon, started a petition to show the strength of feeling behind upgrading the A1.

So far, 368 people have signed the petition.

It seems likely that a route similar to the one proposed in 1994 will be adopted should the scheme go ahead as much of the issues outlined 20-odd years ago are still prominent now, perhaps even more exacerbated by the increase of traffic.

Terry Hayward, chairman of the A1 Safety Group, said: "Back then, I was chairman

of Buckden Parish Council and there were two possible schemes. One was west of the current route from south of St Neots and up to Brampton Hut, the other followed the route until Southoe and then went west bypassing Buckden. Both were what Buckden wanted – a bypass.

"We wouldn't be supportive if they expanded the existing road, into six lanes instead of four, as there are enough problems as it is and they would have to knock down homes."

He added: "I urge everyone to sign the petition as the

argument for the A1 upgrade is that it is the third line of a triangle. We are getting an A14 improvement, the A428 is getting done, but the A1 is forgotten.

"If you look at it as a three-legged stool, with the roads as legs, if one of the legs fails then it collapses, if all three are improved we will have a solid transport system in Huntingdonshire."

The Highways Agency said back then that the existing road runs close to housing and has a "particularly severe" effect on those properties.

It also said simple widening of the road throughout was not feasible.

However, the plans may be altered between Biggleswade and Brampton as in 1994, the agency planned a three-lane motorway between Baldock and Biggleswade, but only a two-lane motorway to the north.

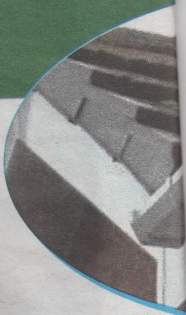
INFORMATION: To sign the petition, visit www.surveymonkey.com/s/A1upgrade.

■ What do you think of the route? Send your views to editor@huntspost.co.uk.



■ The blue line maps the 1994 preferred route. The red lines show the existing roads.

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