



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Nick Harris – CEO  
National Highways  
National Traffic Operations Centre  
3 Ridgeway  
Quinton Business Park  
Birmingham  
B32 1AF

2<sup>nd</sup> December 2021

Dear Nick,

**RE: A14 JUNCTION 55 COPDOCK INTERCHANGE PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

I am writing to provide my support for the improvement of the A12/A14 Copdock Interchange. As the Member of Parliament for South Suffolk, the Copdock Interchange falls within my constituency and the significant congestion at this junction is the most substantial issue in our local road network. As such, following consistent campaigning by all of Suffolk's MPs, I was delighted when this scheme was identified as a development project in RIS2.

I am pleased that National Highways have now brought forward proposals for these necessary improvements, and that two options are currently under public consultation. I believe that it is important to gather comments from the public and various stakeholders before your team develop their final plans, and hope that this process will help to create the best possible solution for local people and our economy.

The junction sits on a vital trade route out of Felixstowe, and it is essential for the UK's future prosperity that a solution is secured to tackle a serious blockage in the Strategic Road Network. According to the UK Port Freight Statistics 2016, 4 million or 41% of all inward TEUS (Twenty-foot Equivalent Units) arrive at the Port of Felixstowe each year. Of these, 70% then travel along the A14 in Suffolk towards the Copdock Interchange. This route is often seriously congested by delays at the junction, creating a hugely costly risk for freight moving to and from Felixstowe.

The region received excellent news in the Budget Statement in March 2021, when the Chancellor announced that the Port of Felixstowe had been awarded Freeport status through the Freeport East project. Covering the UK's busiest container port, two major ferry ports and located close to the East Coast green energy cluster, Freeport East will offer a unique combination of advantages to benefit traders, manufacturers, and clean energy suppliers. As one of eight new freeports in the UK, it will be a hub for global trade and innovation, and create up to 13,500 new jobs. Additionally, it is anticipated that Freeport East could generate a Gross Value Added (GVA) of £5.5 billion over 10 years. This is an important opportunity for the East of England's businesses and growth.



As highlighted in the recent report by the South Suffolk Taskforce, to maximise the potential gain for suppliers and jobseekers, the Copdock Interchange requires a significant overhaul. Without major improvements and a complete redesign of this junction, the Freeport status opportunity cannot be maximised. This view is supported by Chris Lewis, CEO of Hutchinson Ports who operate the Port of Felixstowe, who stated: "The Copdock Interchange sits at the centre of the Freeport area, almost equidistant from the three tax sites at Felixstowe, Harwich and Gateway 14, which will be the focus for new investment in the Freeport. The efficient operation of the junction will aid the successful delivery of the ambitions for the Freeport."

Beyond the necessity of these improvements to the economic success of the region and wider country, the delays at the junction also cause major issues in the local road network. When the junction is congested, the surrounding communities are significantly affected. Northbound A12 traffic approaching the junction regularly reaches from the Copdock Interchange all the way back to Capel St Mary, and the roads in the community of Pinewood (north of the Copdock Interchange) can become fully blocked by commuters attempting to access the A12 and A14 through the junction. The reality of the failure of the junction in its current format is that, twice a day, local road users will avoid the junction entirely by travelling on smaller roads through the middle of relatively small communities. These roads were not designed for such consistent heavy usage and this activity presents a risk to other local road users and pedestrians.

As such, I welcome these proposals to improve the Copdock Interchange, and look forward to reviewing the feedback to the National Highway's consultation with your team in early 2022. I am committed to working with National Highways to secure this necessary improvement for my constituents and the wider region.

Yours sincerely,

James Cartlidge MP  
Member of Parliament for South Suffolk