

A View from the District

The Government has at last released plans for the A14. It has in fact proposed 4 separate schemes which are intended to mesh together, and I have attended a briefing on the 3 minor ones and the exhibition on the major scheme. The minor ones consist of (a) a new eastbound lane from Girton to Histon, (b) a new westbound lane from Histon to Girton, and (c) modification to the Girton flyover. The changes to the interchange are that the new lane will become a filter to the M11 (only) and the existing filter will serve the A14 (only); but remain single-lane. There is no consultation on these, which must be completed by 31 March 2015.

A few details of the fourth scheme can be seen at <http://tinyurl.com/o4t3y7k> and the basic intention is pretty similar to the one proposed under Labour. The Girton flyover will be much expanded to the west to allow for better access to the A14(W). The current A14 will become the main through road, with a toll installed at Swavesey. A new, single-carriageway, local road will be constructed from Girton to Huntingdon. Bar Hill gets a second access point in a very complex junction to the A14 and to the local road. The current J30 (Dry Drayton Road) will no longer connect to the A14. The bridge serving our Footpath 4, which runs from Woody Green to Huntingdon Road, will have to be rebuilt. Apart from those bare facts, the engineers at the exhibition could tell me almost nothing.

I asked about speed limits. At the earlier briefing I was told a 50 limit had been considered but rejected because of its economic disbenefit in longer journey times. At this second consultation I was told it could be considered (but of course for a different scheme; it would make most sense on the Girton–Histon section). Girton Parish Council and Histon and Impington Parish Council are issuing a joint response to the 3 earlier schemes in which they call for a 50 limit. I asked about resurfacing the roads with low-noise tarmac and was told that new road surfaces would be finished with low-noise tarmac but that there is currently no intention to resurface existing sections. I asked about facilities for non-motorised users and was told that plans might be developed later for the local road. I asked why Northstowe – supposedly such an important part of the mix – was not represented in the details available, and was told this is because no planning application has yet been made.

I did not ask about the funding model, since it is not the engineers' responsibility. Local authorities are expected to make small donations – small in the context of the £1.5bn needed, but ruinously large for the District. Effectively it will wipe out our reserves and mortgage all our infrastructure development funding for years to come. I tried to get the Council to refuse this model when it was put to us, but unsuccessfully. We didn't even try to use it as a bargaining tool.

I apologise for the length of this report, but I imagine for most of you the A14 is a major concern. And of course no serious planning will start until after the next general election, and who knows what will happen then.

I have had meetings with the leaders of the NW Cambridge project who have been keen to discuss my concerns about various aspects including the relation between the schools, and the 'branding' of the part of the development within our Parish.

The JDCC on 21 August received a (very) preliminary application for NIAB 1 which includes land within South Cambs. We noted several significant concerns but approved the application. We have asked to see the master plan for the whole development. We were also given a briefing on the proposals for Chesterton Station, at the end of which one Councillor described

it as 'appalling'. Too little attention seems to have been given to convenience of access and too much to non-functional aspects of the design.

If you would like my fuller monthly report emailed to you please contact me at scdc@de-lacey.org and I shall add you to the list of recipients. If you have any District Council issues you would like to discuss please don't hesitate to ask me.

Douglas de Lacey