

Objection to the Development of the Mereham Settlement on the grounds that it fails to address the needs of existing cyclists and potential residents of Mereham.

Area Covered by my objection.

I consider that it is reasonable to expect cyclists to ride up to about 10 Km to their destination in the flat country around Mereham. There will be some keen cyclists who will ride further to attractive destinations. Multiplex suggest that the maximum distance that cyclists are likely to cycle is 5Km. I have just ridden from Ely which is about 10Km which was a pleasant easy ride via Witchford. I would point out that I am an elderly Gent.

The serious point is that by choosing a short cycling distance (i.e. 5 km) this Multiplex choice will result in a wholly inadequate provision for cycling. And this is self-serving: if no cycling routes are provided, people will not cycle. On the other hand, if good routes are provided, people will cycle more and will cycle further. A larger distance - at least 10 km - should be used.

(Editors Note: Before the cyclepath from Hardwick to Coton was constructed, there were very few people commuter-cycling from Hardwick and points west to Cambridge. After the path was constructed beside the A1303 (A428 to M11 Link) there has been a great increase in the number cycling. Many of these are from the new town of Cambourne, a distance of 16 Km.)

I therefore define the area under consideration as being from Mereham to:
Haddenham in the West via A1123 approx 4km

Cottenham in the South West via B1049 approx 7km

Cambridge Science Park in South via A10 & Landbeach approx 14km

Milton in the South via A10 & Landbeach approx 12km

Landbeach in the South via A10 approx 10km

Waterbeach in the South via A10 approx 10km

Denny End & Science Park via A10 approx 5km

Wicken Fen East via A1123 approx 11km

Ely via Witchford approx 9km

Ely via A10 approx 8km

Witchford via lanes approx 7km

Sutton via A1123 & A1421 approx 8km

Detailed consideration of routes.

I consider that all these routes are important and need consideration. However the most important ones are those to Cottenham, to all points along the line of the A10 up to the Cambridge Science Park and to Ely.

Cottenham is reached via the B1049. The B1049 is a narrow busy road that is not attractive or safe for cyclists. In places it is relatively straight and cars are driven at high speeds. Traffic calming is proposed which will not be sufficient. The road will need a dedicated shared use path separated from the road.

Places South along the A10. Multiplex intend to improve the existing cycle path from the Landbeach turn at Goose Hall to the Northern access to Milton. There is also some proposal to improve the cycle path through Milton. The Jane Costan bridge is to be demolished thus requiring cyclists to use the extremely dangerous A10/A14 junction until works are completed.

This is a major route some of which is unlit in places. In any other European country this would rate two cycletracks at least 2M wide, on each side of the road. This is the minimum standard needed to attract cycling to this busy route. It is necessary to have two tracks as riding against the traffic flow is very hard at night due to car head light dipped in your direction.

Objection to the Development of the Mereham Settlement on the grounds that it fails to address the needs of existing cyclists and potential residents of Mereham.

There is an alternative route via Landbeach which will need a good crossing place to access Milton.

Multiplex propose a path alongside the A10 Milton bypass which is undesirable as it would encourage cyclists to access the A10/A14 junction.

North of Goose Hall there is a clear need for two separate shared use paths all the way to the Mereham Access point. This is justified in that this provides access to all places south. I do not have details of the Multiplex proposal at the time of writing.

Mereham to Wicken Fen. This will be via the A1123 which is just about acceptable. I doubt whether the usage justifies the expense of a cycle track though it would be desirable. There is a second possibility of a route via Stretham Big Engine this hinges on Sustrans building the projected bridge at Upware and the building of tracks from the Mereham main access point on the A10 to Upware. This Sustrans proposal is a very attractive proposition and it would be desirable if Multiplex could provide some financial support for this project.

Mereham to Ely via Stretham. Multiplex are proposing a cycle track to Little Thetford. There is a clear need for two tracks along this section for the same reasons as noted for the A10 South of Stretham.

The section that already exists from Little Thetford to the big roundabout south of Ely is totally inadequate, it is too narrow and too close to the main road. This route is therefore dangerous for cyclists and few cyclists will be attracted to use this section of the A10. There is again a clear need for two shared use tracks. The roundabout south of Ely may need extra cycling provisions to make it safer.

Mereham to Witchford. Providing that traffic calming discourages motor access via the existing lanes this is likely to be a good route to Ely. There is a reasonable

cyclepath along the north side of the A1123 between Witchford and the A10 and there is a crossing point at the A10.

Mereham to Haddenham and Sutton. Route to Haddenham may need some consideration. Route via A1421 may be acceptable or an alternative route is available via the lanes which is likely to be very attractive.

I have not seen detailed plans of the proposed cycle crossing points across the A10. Diagrams 5.2, 5.3, 5.6 & 5.7 do not appear to be definitive as there is no key to what line if any represent cycle tracks. Further there is no indication of crossing points on access roads. Further the probability that more competent cyclists will see the road as a safer option has not been considered.

Summary.

It is clear that though the intention of the Mereham Development is to provide Cycling as a sustainable and healthy option that the Developers have seriously underestimated the distances and the consequential need to provide many more cycling facilities that are both safe and attractive to potential users. You will be aware that the existing situation for cyclists between Ely and Cambridge is awful as the A10 is far too busy for cyclists and the B1049 is too narrow and has too much traffic to attract any other than the most dedicated type of cyclists even at this time. The situation is likely to become significantly worse when Mereham is built especially along the A10 which will become overloaded. The use of Milton and the Jane Costan bridge must be bad news for cyclists trying to access the Milton Science Park.

I am concerned that this lack of adequate provision of cycling routes can easily be self-serving. By not providing safe and good cycle routes, cycle usage is likely to be significantly reduced. Many potential new cyclists will be discouraged from cycling and will drive instead.

Objection to the Development of the Mereham Settlement on the grounds that it fails to address the needs of existing cyclists and potential residents of Mereham.

There is a clear lack of understanding by the developers of the perception of danger that anyone who is not used to cycling will feel which will mean they will not be tempted to take up what they see as a hazardous and stressful method of transport.

The health benefits of cycling are obvious, most cyclists live longer more active lives and obesity is rare among cyclists. It also is a very good activity for reducing stress. For short rides cycling is usually quicker than using a car, especially in and around Cambridge. Cycling also saves precious motor fuel with important benefits for climate change and oil depletion. New and improved cycling facilities need to be a core part of all new developments.

I therefore consider that Multiplex has failed to plan for the standards necessary that are implied by their own general statement. The cycling provisions need to be readdressed before the development can be considered sustainable.

Mike Stapleton 12th October 2007