

Objections to Northstowe Planning Applications by the Cyclists' Touring Club Cambridge.

I AM WRITING TO YOU IN MY CAPACITY AS THE RIGHT TO RIDE OFFICER FOR THE CYCLISTS' TOURING CLUB (CAMBRIDGE). WE HAVE REVIEWED THE NORTHSTOWE PLANNING APPLICATION FROM A CYCLING PERSPECTIVE AND WE CONSIDER THAT BOTH THE PROPOSED NEW CYCLE ROUTES AND THE CHANGES TO EXISTING CYCLE ROUTES (NOTABLY NATIONAL CYCLE ROUTE 51) REQUIRE REDESIGN AND IMPROVEMENTS IN MANY AREAS IN ORDER TO ADDRESS SAFETY ISSUES.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS ARE SHOWN IN **BOLD TYPE**

We object to the following planning applications on the following grounds.

Planning Application 1. S/7006/07/0

The planning document December 2007 Design and Access Statement Doc 11 states that there are main and secondary feeder routes. The only thing that is clear is that there are four major access routes for cars into the development. There are no clear statements as to which are Primary or Secondary Routes other than that the Runway Boulevard is a Primary Route. It is reasonable to assume that the two other routes leading in from the South West roundabout are Secondary Routes.

Longstanton to Earith Road. Existing Roads. This appears to be the 1st major access route.

The section from High Street Longstanton to the Guided Bus Crossing is relatively narrow and busy with no pavements for most of its length. Cyclists tend to hold up traffic which can't easily pass them with a potential for accidents. There is heavy traffic including heavy lorries at most times of the day which will increase when Northstowe is built. I understand there have been five accidents on this stretch of road including one fatality. I consider this section to be dangerous.

At the very least a cycle path is needed on the NE side of the road linking with the existing cycle path continuing on towards Willingham. We understand that the cyclepath between the CGB Park and Ride and Willingham is considered inadequate and needs upgrading.

There are no details of proposed access to Northstowe from these roads other than out lines shown on the Supporting Illustrative Composite Plan for Northstowe. This plan has no number. As the Northern section of Northstowe is the first to be built these access routes need to be improved before construction work starts.

The Guided Bus Way within Northstowe

Development Area. Refer to Northstowe planning application documents December 2007 Design and Access Statement Doc 11 (CD3)

We understand the Guided Bus Way within this area will not be available until 2013. This route appears to be a special case with defined sections along its length. It generally has a cycle lane on each side and does not have on street parking. We understand that the bus and cycle lanes will amalgamate in the central area.

We recommend that the five bus stops including the Central one should be in laybys so as not to disrupt the cycle lane.

Primary and Secondary Roads in Northstowe

Generally there are separate cycle lanes are proposed on Primary and Secondary roads except in the central area where the Bus lanes widen and are shared with cyclists. We are concerned that placing cycle lanes immediately outside parking areas is highly dangerous due to car doors being opened.

We recommend that the cycle lanes be removed and speed should be limited to 20mph.

There is considerable evidence from Europe that limiting speeds is a successful method of reducing the high accident rate. Vulnerable users suffer one of the higher accident rates in the UK when compared to Europe.

The Runway Boulevard has three sections. We consider this to be a Primary Road.

A) Section 1 the entry into Northstowe has a 3M cycleway separate from the Highway on one side of the road.

We consider that two cycle ways (One cycle path on each side of the road) are needed to link up with the proposed cycle paths on the Dry Drayton Link and the Dual Carriageway Link to Hatton's Road.

We point out that conflicts between cyclists lead to accidents on single cycle ways in town areas. If a single cycle way is provided there will be a need to provide a safe crossing point at the point where on road cycling starts on either side of the Runway Boulevard start. This section needs a 30mph speed limit.

B) Section 2. It is proposed to have two cycle lanes each 2M wide but with car parking on one side of the road. We expect this will result in a dangerous situation as opening car doors will cause accidents to cyclists.

We recommend that the speed limit for this section reduced to 20mph. We recommend

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that the cycle lanes be removed as they put cyclists too close to cars. We recommend clear notices warning other road users to expect cyclists using the road area.

We consider this to be the safest option.

We consider that there is still a risk of accidents with car doors opening that could be addressed by painting a 1M wide hatched strip on the road on the outer edge of car parking areas.

C) Section 3. The central area would just have two 4.5M sections used by all users. We consider this should be subject to a 20mph maximum speed limit. This arrangement should work provided it is clearly indicated that there will be cyclists and Pedestrians in this area.

Primary roads

It is difficult to decide just which are the primary roads. The spec on page 76 of Doc 11 says there are three main arteries across each segment of the town. It is unclear which are Primary roads in the other areas of the town.

These are similar to the Boulevard section B) except that Parking areas are provided on both sides of the road.

We consider this could be addressed by similar system to that suggested for the Runway Boulevard section B) i.e. remove the on road cycle ways and reduce the speed limit to 20mph.

Secondary Roads.

We understand these should all be subject to a 20mph speed limit. We do not regard cycle lanes in these situations as being a safe option and recommend that they should be omitted.

We note that there will be parking areas and landscaping along both sides of these roads. We consider the general use of such roads to be acceptable. We consider that there is still a risk of accidents with car doors opening that could be addressed by painting a 1M wide hatched strip on the road on the outer edge of car parking areas. Road users must be warned of the presence of vulnerable users on these roads,

The Cycle Loop and the Bridleway Ref 7.2.1. Cycling, Walking and Horseriding Section

These routes around the Town are likely to have major problems where they cross the three main access roads.

We consider the only safe solution at the SW approach from Dry Drayton and Bar Hill is to amalgamate these routes onto a bridge over all three of the access roads. See also comments on NCR51 problems.

Design and Access Statement Doc 11 Ref. 7.2.4 The cycling and walking routes map shows NCR51 but fails to address problems that will arise as a result of building Northstowe. These problems will be particularly acute in Longstanton, and on the Longstanton Road at the crossing points over the access roads into Northstowe.

National Cycle Route 51 NCR51

This route is referred to in the Traffic Assessment. We consider that this forms part of Applications 1, 2 and 3. Drawing Northstowe P007 shows Longstanton Road.

The existing NCR51 is currently the only hard surfaced route from Cambridge to St Ives and Huntingdon. The Guided bus route offers an alternative but it is unlikely to be surfaced between Longstanton and St Ives. There is a real doubt that the surface to be provided will stand up to use by horses. If this route isn't surfaced then the existing Route 51 needs to be preserved.

There is already some concern over various section of the route which are far from satisfactory.

1. The Roundabout just west of Longstanton already has fast traffic entering it from Bar Hill. (Traffic continuing on the road to Earith has already had 5 accidents on the section leading to the Guided Bus Crossing).

The section of Over Road including the roundabout to its junction with High street needs cycling provisions until the new bypass is built. As mentioned in the Longstanton to Earith Roads Section a cycle path is required urgently from Longstanton to the Cambridge Guided Bus CGB Park and Ride Site.

2. There are three other access roads to Northstowe which cross NCR51 Longstanton Road in quick succession. No thought has been given to making these crossings safe or for the delays they are bound to cause cyclists. All we know is that the route is to be kept open for cyclists. We consider that these crossings must be redesigned in order to maintain the integrity of NCR51 as a major National Cycle Route. In practice we consider that the use of three traffic light junctions in quick succession is not an acceptable solution to this problem. The same problem will affect the Bridleway proposed around Northstowe which crosses these access roads near the NCR51 crossings.
We recommend a bridge to carry both routes over the three access roads.
3. There is bound to be significant rat running of traffic heading out of Northstowe and

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Longstanton to access via Oakington to Girton, Histon and Cottenham. This means that the roads to all three places will become much busier. The cycletrack to Girton is substandard in that its width is too narrow further it has obvious conflicts with residential access SE of Oakington. It runs beside a hedge which is bound to overgrow the path reducing its width still further.

This section needs upgrading particularly widening to at least 2M

Even without the expected increase in traffic we consider that this cycle path should be improved as it forms a main cycle route (NCR51) to Northstowe and North West Cambridgeshire complimenting the CGB route.

Guided Bus Way. (CGB) Cyclepath.

These access routes are referred to in the Traffic Assessment.

The Guided Bus way provides a wonderful opportunity for good cycle access to Cambridge, Swavesey and St Ives. The current proposal is to hard surface it as far as Histon. There is a GAF3 bid in for surfacing as far as Longstanton P & R. If the route isn't adequately surfaced potential cyclists will just not use it. The failure to surface it to Swavesey and St Ives will be a huge mistake as the potential for this route is very high.

The route to St Ives needs surfacing and if necessary drainage.

1 The lakes between St Ives and Swavesey are highly attractive for leisure cyclists.

2 The distance to St Ives is well within the range of moderately fit cyclists and is bound to attract users as the existing Route 51 is of such poor quality. In particular the new roundabout west of Longstanton is dangerous and on the section between Fenstanton and St Ives the existing Cycle path (NCR51) is narrow, often floods and has dangerously bad sight lines in places. There are other sections of NCR51 where the right of way is lost at intervals at junctions.

3 The Guided Bus Way Cyclepath from Swavesey to Northstowe will be very popular with residents of Swavesey who want to shop in the new Northstowe Center.

4 If this cyclepath from Histon to St Ives is surfaced it will greatly improve National Cycle Route 51

Ref Drgs.

Ap4LS001 Landscape Application 4: A14 Access Corridor

Ap12/LS002 Landscape Application 2: Hatton's Road Cross Sections A-F

196/LE/2900 A14 Link Road 1

196/LE/2200 Hatton's Road Upgrade Sheets 1 & 2 of 2

These drawings showing a cycletrack located along the SE side of the road. There is no verge shown on the cross section diagram. This is dangerous. The road is narrow, busy and windswept. Gusts of wind from passing vehicles are likely to sweep cyclists off the path. This is a vital link for residents of Northstowe wishing to access Bar Hill.

1 The cyclepath/footpath should be separated from the road by at least 2M. Surface LED lights will be needed as this is an unlit area.

The verge will reduce the problems of windage from passing vehicle and dazzle from headlights.

2 There should be a cyclepath on both sides of this road as it is already known to be dangerous and will get worse once the Northstowe development starts in the Northern Quadrant. The reasons for this road being dangerous are that it is relatively narrow, exposed and already has a very high level of traffic as noted in the surveys for the planning application.

3 If only one cyclepath is to be provided then the NW side of the road would be a better option as it would be possible to reach the A14 overbridge from Longstanton and Northstowe without two crossings of Hatton's Road. It will link with the cycletrack on Hatton's Rd. leading to the centre of Longstanton & on towards Earith and the North of Northstowe. Further the general flow of traffic will be towards Northstowe in the evening so lights will generally be behind cyclists heading home to Northstowe.

4 Which ever side is chosen it needs to be constructed very early in the construction phase for Northstowe as the existing road is too dangerous for cyclists.

5 The continuation from Hatton's Rd NW to the Over Road is a straight, fast road resulting in vehicles approaching the roundabout at the Over Road too fast. They then squeeze into a narrow section of Over road to the junction with the High Street.

This is dangerous and needs to be addressed.

6 Hattons Road is the only route to Bar Hill

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which will be the nearest shopping centre during the first part of the development. Hattons Rd will have to carry the construction vehicles to be used for the building of Northstowe. The projections show considerable numbers of Heavy Vehicles using this route every day during construction.

7 A Cycle path is needed from the new road development just east of the A14 to the A14 bridge and from the A14 Bridge to the Bar Hill roundabout.

The Bridge has a path in place on both sides of the road. A crossing place will be needed for cyclists going to Bar Hill (Tesco). The A14 junctions and bridge will get much busier when the new roads to Northstowe are constructed.

A cycleway is needed early in the construction phase of the works.

Main Access road. Dual Carriageway Referred to as part of Hatton's Rd Application 2 S/7007/07/F

Landscape Application 2 Hatton's Road Apl2/LS001
Landscape Application 2: Hatton's Road – Cross Sections G-K Ap2/LS003
Hatton's Road Link Sheets 1 and 2 196/LE/2302 & 2300
Hatton's Road Dualling 196/LE2102

The will be main route from Bar Hill to Northstowe it has a single Cycleway/footpath on the NW side generally separated from the main carriageway by a verge. Again a second cycle path on the SE side of the road would be desirable as this will eventually be the main route from Northstowe to Bar Hill. If only one path is provided then we agree the path indicated is on the better side of the highway.

We stress that separation from the carriageway of at least 2M is essential and LED Lights must be fitted.

Northstowe to Dry Drayton Road. Application No 3 S/7008/07/F

Ref Drawings

Landscape Application 3: Dry Drayton Road Apl3/LS001
Landscape Application 3: Dry Drayton road Cross Sections Ap3/LS002
Dry Drayton Link Road Sheets 1-4
196/LE/2800,2801,2802 & 2600
A14 Link road Sheet 3 of 3 196/LE/2902

This road has a single cycle path/footway along its NE Side. There is no separation from the Highway

which will lead to danger particularly at night going towards Northstowe due to opposing lights on oncoming traffic dazzling cyclists.

Cycle paths are needed on both sides of the road with at least 2M separation from the highway. LED lights will need to be fitted.

Planning Application 4. S/7009/07/F

196/LE/2900 A14 Link Road 1 of 3

196/LE/2901 A14 Link Road 2 of 3

196/LE/2902 A14 Link Road 3 of 3

196/LE/2101 Hattons Road Dualling

The main A14 link road has no provision for cycleways. This needs to be considered in the wider context of the A14 improvements which have yet to be designed.

We point out that if this road is part of the secondary road provisions for the A14 extending towards Huntingdon then a cycle way will be needed.

Three of the reference drawings 196/LE/2101 196/LE/2900 and 196/LE/2901 show the cycleway from the Hatton's Road to Bar Hill while 196/LE/2902 shows part of the Cycleway to Dry Drayton.

We point out that the continuation over the A14 to Bar Hill is not shown but is needed very early in the time scale for Northstowe as it is a vital link between Northstowe and Bar Hill. It is not possible to comment on this link without further information.

Drawing 196/LE/2902 shows the link to Dry Drayton which ends at the approach to the A14 Bridge.

We consider it should be extended over the A14 Bridge. We point out that this section appears to run directly beside the road and point out this is dangerous. **There should be a 2M verge separating cyclists from the road and LED surface lights need to be fitted.**

Mike Stapleton. CTC Right to Ride Officer for the Cambridge Area.