

A14 Widening

Background

As you will all be aware the The Highways Agency has published the draft orders for the widening of the A14. See <http://www.highways.gov.uk/roads/projects/4211.aspx>

These are the plans that they've got for widening it, the changes they'll be making to associated roads etc. With all of this goes an Environmental Statement covering the noise, air quality, drainage etc. impacts.

They have also given Milton PC a copy of the plans and the Environmental Statement.

The proposals will directly affect Milton and the country park as the A14 is to be widened to three lanes each way on the stretch past us.

Specifically it will be three lanes each way from Histon. At the A10 interchange the nearside lanes will peel off up onto the roundabout so only two lanes each way will go under the junction as now but then there will again be three lanes each way to the Fen Ditton junction where the nearside lanes will again peel off.

The Videos

We obtained a copy of the Highways Agency video which shows an aerial view as you drive east down the A14 and a second video which shows a driver's eye view driving west.



These are half hour videos so we've extracted clips from both of these videos showing you the stretch from Impington to Fen Ditton and vice versa and they are online for you to watch at http://www.milton.org.uk/a14_videos.html

Noise from the A14

As I've explained we will have 50% more road width passing Milton after the A14 widening. Moreover the traffic will be passing more quickly as there will be less congestion. These two factors are inevitably going to lead to an increase in noise pollution. The Highways Agency say they are going to use "whisper tarmac" but councillors of long standing will remember that the A14 from Milton to Fen Ditton already has such tarmac.

The bottom line therefore is that we can expect a significant increase in road noise from a widened A14.

Sound Barriers

The videos shows no sign of any sound barriers on the Milton side on the stretch from the A10 to Fen Ditton and that this is the Highways Agency's intention has since been confirmed by villager David Owen, who visited the Highways Agency exhibition in Cambridge.

Their argument for not putting up a sound barrier is that research shows that these barriers are only really effective out to about 300m from the highway. Beyond that distance you don't notice much difference. They therefore only install sound barriers where it will affect people's homes. Businesses and public amenities aren't considered.

Issues for You to Consider

1. Assuming that we accept the 300m effectiveness then residents at the southern end of Cambridge Road and the first few houses in The Rowans are less than 300m from the A14 so **I would suggest council should be making representations on their behalf.**
2. Assuming that we accept the 300m effectiveness then this would benefit a good proportion of the dry area of the Country Park. Specifically it would be effective as far as the northern end of Hall's Pit (the small lake in the middle between the two larger one) and it should significantly reduce sound levels at the busiest end south of the 13th Public Drain where the War Memorial, play areas and Visitor Centre all sit.

Cambridge Sport Lakes Trust, the Friends of Milton Country Park and the Save Milton Country Park Campaign collectively have a lot of evidence including hard figures for how well used the Park is. **I would suggest that the Park is a great resource to the village and that the council strongly support CSLT in lobbying for sound barriers to benefit the Park.**

3. The section of the A14 which passes Milton becomes elevated as it rises above the Cam flood plain to cross the river and the railway line. As a layman it seems to me that this is inevitably going to help sound from the A14 carry further and certainly here in the north of Milton in Church Lane the roar of the A14 is a common background noise in our garden. It therefore seems to me that the council should be questioning the assumption that sound barriers will only be effective out to 300m. **I would suggest that council consider taking independent advice on this.** Impington PC, along with other affected parish councils, are consulting someone who chairs the European standards body on highways noise barriers so they're probably your first port of call.

You have until 6th January 2010 to log comments and objections. Being heard at the public inquiry will be dependent on what is sent in by then.