

OLD CHESTERTON RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Comments on the Planning Application for a new railway station at Chesterton Sidings

Planning Reference: C/05001/13/CCC

Old Chesterton Residents' Association covers an area roughly bounded by Scotland Road, Elizabeth Way, the River, Fen Road, Water Lane and Green End Road. It is one of the founders of the Federation of Cambridge Residents' Associations and plays an active part in monitoring planning proposals and commenting on local planning policies, transport issues and matters affecting our open spaces.

1. General Comments

- 1.1 The plans for the new station are welcomed. Its construction is likely to set the tone for future development of the wider area comprising the Science Park to the river bounded by the guided busway the A14 the river and the railway line. In the absence of a Master Plan for this area and with the Transport Policy still under development this key decision has to be made with full regard to the likely intensification of development around the site.
- 1.2 We therefore support the view that this should be regarded as an essentially temporary development that forms the foundation for a lot more to come. The station construction should have strong foundations adequate to allow for it to play a full part in future developments by expanding its facilities and making full use of the flying freehold of its large footprint.
- 1.3 Whilst we welcome the principle of a new station at Chesterton Sidings, we think that the plans as presented do not represent an efficient use of land or demonstrate good urban design and they fail to fully mitigate the negative impact on the residents of East Chesterton.

2. The Name

- 2.1 Cambridge Science Park has been chosen as a working name by the County Council but the Science Park is actually half a mile away across a principal highway on which all the signs for the Science Park point in the opposite direction to the station. We suggest a more location specific name such as Chesterton Park. This will avoid confusion to prospective station users and has a pleasant sylvan ring to it.

3. Access

- 3.1 The development is constrained by resources but we consider that there are two aspects of access that could and should be dealt with at this stage to reduce conflicts between various groups of road users and mitigate some existing problems.

4. Vehicle access

- 4.1 Signage should direct all station traffic other than public service vehicles towards Cowley Road. **All** Public Service Vehicles should use the guided busway extension which should also provide the main vehicular access to Trinity Farm Estate by a new access at Nuffield Close. We do not consider it necessary to have a guideway on this short section of route, there is no kerbed guideway on the short section through Orchard Park, other traffic can be excluded simply beyond the junction with Nuffield Close by means of rising bollards, a proven and successful means of controlling access elsewhere in the city. The signage from Milton Road would indicate "Buses and Trinity Farm Traffic Only No Through Route".
- 4.2 Creating this access to Trinity Farm estate will enable closure of Nuffield Road at the point it enters Trinity Farm Estate and thus remove most heavy vehicles from what is now a very busy road serving Shirley School, the Health Centre and a large residential area. This will make it safer for cycle access to the station

5. Commuter Parking

- 5.1 Users of Chesterton Station who wish to travel there by car will find plenty of options to park at no cost to themselves on residential roads or on car parks (e.g. the GP surgery or offices) in the vicinity. By clearly directing all station traffic along Milton Road and into Cowley Road the risk to East Chesterton from commuter parking can be reduced but not eliminated.
- 5.2 This is a long-term problem affecting many areas of the city and we would prefer to see a 'commuter specific' solution rather than blanket restrictions to on-street parking which would not otherwise be needed. We suggest a ban on commuter parking with enforcement by fines when persistent commuter parking is reported by residents of the properties directly affected. This would be simple to administer once the principle has received the necessary legal sanction.
- 5.3 OCRA has previously called for Chesterton station parking to be free of charge but understand parking charges is part of the business plan.

6. Cycle Access

- 6.1 Residents already have grave concerns over the impact of heavy cycle use in Water Street and across Green Dragon Bridge at peak times and we are concerned about the increase in the wider area as people travel to or from the station. This needs to be mitigated by removing transport mode conflict as far as possible, which could be achieved by creating real cycleways with street lighting, clearly separated from pedestrian routes and active enforcement to ensure that pedestrian routes are kept clear of parked vehicles and cyclists.
- 6.2 Cyclists should be directed as far as possible towards the Nuffield Road access. We do not accept that Moss Bank should become the major through cycle route to Chesterton Station. This narrow residential road is completely

inadequate as a long-term access route to the station. Access to the station should therefore be regarded as a temporary measure pending creation of an adequate alternative as and when funding permits.

- 6.3 We have noted the desire of the Cambridge Cycling Campaign for the avoidance of right angled bends on any cycle route. This indicates that the principal cycle route needs to be via Nuffield Road and all signage should be directed to secure this. There should be no signed cycle route through the residential areas off Nuffield Road or through Bramblefields. If an access to the station is created at this point it should be for pedestrians only to ensure clear segregation from cyclists.
- 6.4 There should be adequately lit access routes for walking and cycling to the station. In particular the route from East Chesterton and Chesterton Station to the Science Park and the Regional College, which largely runs alongside the guided bus, should have proper streetlights. In order to minimise light pollution a lighting study for all lights at the station and on the new access routes should be carried out. Only modern LEDs should be used, directing light only towards the areas where it is needed. We are pleased to note that there is no lighting proposed directly affecting the Bramblefields Nature Reserve.

7. Respect Bramblefields Nature Reserve

- 7.1 Bramblefields Nature Reserve still appears as a major access route to the station. This is the only nature reserve in the area and a fragile and valuable ecosystem. We oppose the intensification of pedestrian or cycle traffic through the Reserve, the building of new paths, the widening of existing paths or lighting in the Nature Reserve. The existence of this route will encourage fly-parking in the Laxton Way area, Pippin Drive and Discovery Way, and also in Long Reach Road, Bourne Road and Cheney Way, which should be discouraged from the outset. A comprehensive ecological survey should also be carried out on the LNR and the adjacent allotments and triangle of land behind Long Reach Road to establish a baseline to monitor any changes to the locally rich biodiversity from the station being opened.

8. Long-term Objectives

- 8.1 As indicated above we are aware of the financial constraints on the promoters of the station proposal and therefore regard this application as being in the nature of creating an inherently temporary facility that does not optimise land use. The pedestrian and cycle access arrangements are less than perfect so we wish the following long-term issues to be noted and that if appropriate conditions and informatives can be attached to the planning consent this should be done.

9. Create an alternative access to Chesterton Fen Road

- 9.1 As the number of trains will increase with the new station, the plans should incorporate an alternative access to Chesterton Fen Road from Cowley Road. Long-term plans should provide for station access on both sides of the railway

track, which is crucial in view of Fen Road potentially being cut off at the level crossing at some point in the future.

- 9.2 As the Fen Road level crossing is not considered safe, many local parents decide to drive their children to the local school on Nuffield Road. The increase in train traffic will make this worse. The foot and cycle bridge over the station should be extended to link the Chesterton Fen area to the new station entrance and to provide a safer access route to the local schools and to bring much of Chesterton Fen into walking distance from the new station. If funding for such an extension is not available within the current scheme, the necessary land should still be reserved and foundation points laid during the station construction.

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