

From: Ann Goodridge [<mailto:>]
Sent: 05 November 2015 12:18
To: A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon
Subject: A14 and air quality

Dear Nicholas,

I enclose my request for the ExA to take more positive action in supporting the demands on the UK in terms of meeting air quality standards.

The current knowledge on air quality and the role played by road transport is changing and growing day by day. It seems that at the very least the Secretary of State should be implored to delay the decision on the A14 proposals. He is after all accountable for our 'performance' on this subject.

Kind regards,

Ann

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Ann Goodridge

I would be grateful if my access details are not passed to others - thanks.

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A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon Improvement Scheme (TR010018)

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Air Quality implications for Hilton

It has not passed the notice of PINS / EXA that there is growing evidence on the poor state of air quality in this country and in particular that created by our road transport. HE's own recent data shows that air quality on our motorways is significantly above EU limits, endangering the lives of regular users. The following article explains:

"Data released by Highways England, the government-owned company that manages the core road network, reveals that those using large sections of the M25 around London, the entire M60 around Manchester, and most motorways around Birmingham risk prolonged exposure to levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) well above maximum limits allowed by the EU's air quality directive and World Health Organisation recommendations.

"Commuters and professional motorists, such as delivery and lorry drivers, are at greatest risk. The government has calculated that thousands of people in Britain may be dying prematurely each year because of exposure to NO₂.

"In response, Highways England plans to install 50 air-quality monitoring stations at the most polluted sites on the motorway and trunk road network and could impose speed restrictions when pollution levels rise, in an effort to reduce emissions.

"We take air pollution on the road network seriously and have an ambition that nobody on or near our roads should be harmed by poor air quality' a spokesman said.

"The discovery that much of the motorway and trunk road network breaches EU pollution levels could have serious implications for government plans to spend £15bn on expanding UK roads to carry more traffic.

"Proposals for 1,300 miles of new lanes on motorways and trunk roads include many in areas that are over the limit." Sunday Times, 1 Nov 15.

The HE response to monitor certain roads with a view to reducing speed limits is clearly too little too late – but we are where we are – and importantly raises a serious question on the validity of building more and more motorways and trunk roads. Reducing speed limits means the same volumes of traffic are passing any point more slowly and thereby lowering emission levels – not eliminating them of course. So the purpose of building the proposed A14 to improve the speed at which long-distance traffic can move through the county is debateable. Now it is likely that lower speed limits will counteract the impact of more lanes and the poor air quality in the area will still increase.

Given the continuing revelations from the motor industry about the actual emission levels from their diesel and petrol cars, it is likely that their role in damaging health will be seen to

be far more significant than even now. The HE data referred to may be the tip of the iceberg in terms of revealing just how much transport pollution is building up in the UK.

“Protecting public health” – a requirement on the Government – includes measures to acknowledge concentrations of pollution, rather than taking an averaging perspective, so that measurements reflect local variations in concentrations. It also means taking account not only of current populations’ health but that of future generations. Therefore there is a need for planning authorities to prevent worsening of air quality even where it is not in current breach of EU limits.

These factors must give the ExA cause for very serious concern as it should our Government and the Dept of Transport in particular in terms of practical action. It is not reasonable, responsible or complying with the spirit of air quality directives to pursue current transport plans while there are such serious issues adding daily to our knowledge about both the state of pollution in this country and the impact of building more ‘solutions’ that simply add the facility to increase poor health.

In terms of Hilton and the proposed A14, many residents are commuters - workers and school children - already experiencing highly polluting journeys. More lanes may speed the flow a little for a while, but we know that the volume of traffic will increase with a wider motorway and we could also end up with lowered speed limits. So those of us who commute will not necessarily enjoy better air quality, rather it seems inevitable that it will be worse – breaching the requirement to protect public health and not to worsen existing air quality levels.

Surely it is time that the Dept of Transport was more imaginative in addressing traffic flows across the country, that they picked up the challenge to reduce road traffic, that they became part of a drive (excuse the pun) to clean up air quality across the country?

Ann Goodridge

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