

Fen Line Users Association

Objection to Cambridge Southeast Transport (CSET) Scheme Statement of case to TWAO inquiry

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Fen Line Users Association represents users of the railway line from King's Lynn to Cambridge and onwards towards London.
- 1.2. **We object to the construction of a new road through open countryside when reopening of the railway line between Cambridge and Haverhill would provide more benefit with less harm to the environment.**
- 1.3. Section 2 below sets out our objection to the scheme in general; sections 3 and 4 detail two specific objections.

2. A1307 corridor

- 2.1. We consider that a preferable solution to congestion in the A1307 corridor would be **reopening the railway to Haverhill**, which was recently assessed as “a good case for future development” by the Restoring your Railways scheme. It would provide Linton and the growing town of Haverhill with environmentally friendly transport to central Cambridge and beyond, including to Cambridge North and other stations on our line, as well as to the Biomedical Campus. Journeys into Cambridge would be significantly faster than the 30 to 50 mph speed limits proposed for the busway, and thus more likely to be competitive with car travel.
- 2.2. The original CSET proposals were for improvements to the A1307 which would deliver similar benefits to the scheme which is the subject of this TWAO for about £100million less. We understand that the current scheme was developed to form part of the Cambridge Autonomous Metro (CAM), which would require a segregated track. This is no longer relevant because the CAM was cancelled in 2021. Even if it was revived, the technology is advancing to the point where it will be possible for driverless buses to run along the A1307; the government has recently announced its intention to legislate to enable such services to begin in 2027.
- 2.3. Therefore, **we would favour implementation of the original scheme**, with the £100M saved being put towards reopening the railway.

3. Proposed route past Sawston

- 3.1. Sheet 10 of the Existing Layout drawings (ref CSET-12-DP2) shows the busway occupying a parcel of land (identified as 101 on Sheet 10 of the Works and Land Plan, ref CSET-11-D01, also parts of 098 and 103) immediately adjacent to an industrial estate which has been built partly over the trackbed of the former railway.
- 3.2. If a busway were to be built on that alignment, reopening the railway would require either moving the busway or acquiring and demolishing the buildings that have been constructed on the former trackbed. Both are unnecessarily expensive compared to leaving space between the busway and the industrial estate.

4. Northern terminus

- 4.1. A recent study commissioned by Railfuture^{1,2} indicated there could be as many as 2,000 daily journeys into Cambridge during the peak. Many of those would be to destinations beyond the Biomedical Campus, requiring passengers to change to rail or to other bus services.
- 4.2. The terminus on Francis Crick Avenue is a very constrained site. There needs to be provision on the east side for substantial numbers of people to be waiting for their bus home in the evening peak.

1 covering letter <https://www.railfuture.org.uk/display3659>

2 report <https://www.railfuture.org.uk/display3658>