

Cambourne-Cambridge Busway Inquiry

Matthew Baker, 22nd October 2025

I am speaking as a resident of the Gough Way Estate, and a worker on the West Cambridge site off the Madingley Road. My daily commute, by bicycle, between my home and my office takes me along Grange Road, past the end of the Rifle Range track where the proposed Busway is intended to terminate.

In our written objection to the proposed route of the Busway, my wife and I highlighted four grounds for our objection:

1. The increased risk of flooding to properties between Grange Road and the M11. This point has been elaborated by others, and therefore in the interests of time I will not be speaking extensively on that point today. Suffice it to say that the increased risk of flooding, arising both from the proposed construction of an embankment and bridge over the Bin Brook and from run-off from the busway being added to water flow in the Bin Brook, is of great concern to the residents of the Gough Way estate. The estate has flooded in the past, and insurance for flooding for properties in the estate is already hard to obtain or extremely expensive.
2. The division and destruction of the ancient natural environment of Coton Orchard and consequent adverse impact on biodiversity and ecology. Again, this point has been well addressed by others, especially Anna Gazeley. I fully support their submissions and will not repeat the details now.

I wish to focus today on the other two points made in my letter, namely firstly **the unsatisfactory location of the end of the proposed busway route at Grange Road**, and secondly **the need to give proper consideration to the obvious alternative route along the Madingley Road into Cambridge, as proposed and studied in detail by Cambridge Past Present & Future (CPPF)**.

First, Grange Road, at the end of the current Rifle Range track, is a thoroughly unsuitable end point for the proposed Busway. Grange Road is an important local route, heavily used by both cycles and pedestrians, including those such as myself accessing the West Cambridge site daily for work, and also by many children accessing St John's College School and King's College School, and by elderly residents (of whom there are many in the Pinehurst Development on Grange Road in particular). Grange Road is definitely not a main artery, and the road has been designed deliberately to discourage through traffic by means of extensive traffic calming measures, including single-track pinch points, speed humps, raised junctions and a 20mph speed limit. There is of course a good reason why Grange Road has been the subject of these measures while

others such as Madingley Road, Queen's Road, Chesterton Road and Victoria Avenue have not: the latter are main arterial roads, and suitable for large vehicles such as buses, while Grange Road, West Road and Sidgwick Avenue are local roads. The motivation for the traffic calming measures in Grange Road was precisely to deter the kind of through-traffic that the busway would create, and especially to deter large vehicles that are not directly serving the institutions and dwellings along Grange Road itself. Although a few buses do serve Grange Road today, notably the U-bus, they are not the largest of buses, and the number of buses is very limited (usually not more than 4 each way per hour) and they specifically offer a local service. This would not be the case for the busway buses, which would be much greater in number – at least 8 each way per hour, though even 10-12 each way per hour has been mentioned – and these buses are full-sized and are primarily through-traffic and should naturally be carried by the main arterial roads.

Further, the junctions which the busway buses would have to negotiate are highly unsuitable. The turns into and out of Grange Road would be very tight, causing a high risk of collisions on the opposite side of the road to that used by the buses, as the ends of the buses would have to swing wide to negotiate the tight bends. The turn out of or into the proposed busway route on the current Rifle Range track to/from the northern section of Grange Road is so sharp and Grange Road so narrow that it would be totally impractical for buses to attempt the turn. The turn to the southern section of Grange Road is also very sharp, as are the turns into and out of West Road or Sidgwick Avenue, which would presumably have to be the subsequent route of the busway buses.

The increased risk caused by many through-buses per hour to the many pedestrians, cyclists, school children, elderly residents and others is not acceptable. The transformation of Grange Road that would result, from a calm, local street, well designed for pedestrians and cyclists, to a major through-bus route, is of great concern.

Not only is Grange Road itself therefore a highly unsuitable end-point for the busway, but also the onward routes for buses from Grange Road are unsuitable. It would in fact, for example, take longer to reach the Addenbrooke's site and Biomedical Campus from the proposed end-point of the busway in Grange Road, than it would to reach the proposed end-point of the busway from Cambourne. The subsequent roads that the buses would have to negotiate on their onward journey into the city are either Sidgwick Avenue or West Road. Sidgwick Avenue is narrow and heavily used by students and local residents on foot or bicycle, and is therefore totally unsuitable for another 16-20 buses per hour. It is also proposed separately to close Sidgwick Avenue altogether to through motor traffic, thus rendering it out of the question for busway traffic. The other alternative, West Road, passes a school entrance and then has no traffic lights or roundabout to facilitate egress onto Queen's Road, where there is another sharp right-angle turn. Next, Silver Street is very narrow, such that buses cannot even pass each

other at the eastern end, and on Silver Street bridge, a well-known photo vantage point, the crowds of tourists who frequently spill off the pavements taking photographs, would be greatly endangered by the addition of 16-20 buses per hour. The onward route from there to the city centre via Trumpington Street, Pembroke Street, Downing Street and St Andrew's Street entails further tight right-angle bends with heavy pedestrian footfall. This route is illustrated in detail on the map I have provided, showing how buses would have to navigate:

1. a sharp right-angle turn into Grange Road, which, as mentioned is a traffic-calmed local road heavily used by cyclists, pedestrians, school children and elderly residents,
2. a sharp right-angle turn into West Road requiring buses to swing across the central line of both Grange Road and West Road,
3. a sharp right-angle turn into Queen's Road with no traffic lights or roundabout to aid egress,
4. a honey-pot site on Silver Street Bridge with large numbers of tourists and other pedestrians often in the road,
5. a narrow blind bend used by large numbers of cyclists by the Anchor pub,
6. a narrow street passable in one direction only at a time,
7. a very sharp right-angle turn into Pembroke Street with heavy pedestrian footfall crossing Pembroke Street at the junction,
8. a junction with heavy pedestrian footfall crossing both Pembroke Street and St Andrew's Street,
9. a very sharp right-angle turn into Park Terrace with heavy pedestrian footfall crossing Park Terrace at the junction,
10. a very sharp right-angle turn into Parker Street, requiring buses to swing over the central line of Parker Street, and
11. a narrow street with a blind turn from Emmanuel Road, where incoming traffic cannot pass outgoing buses.

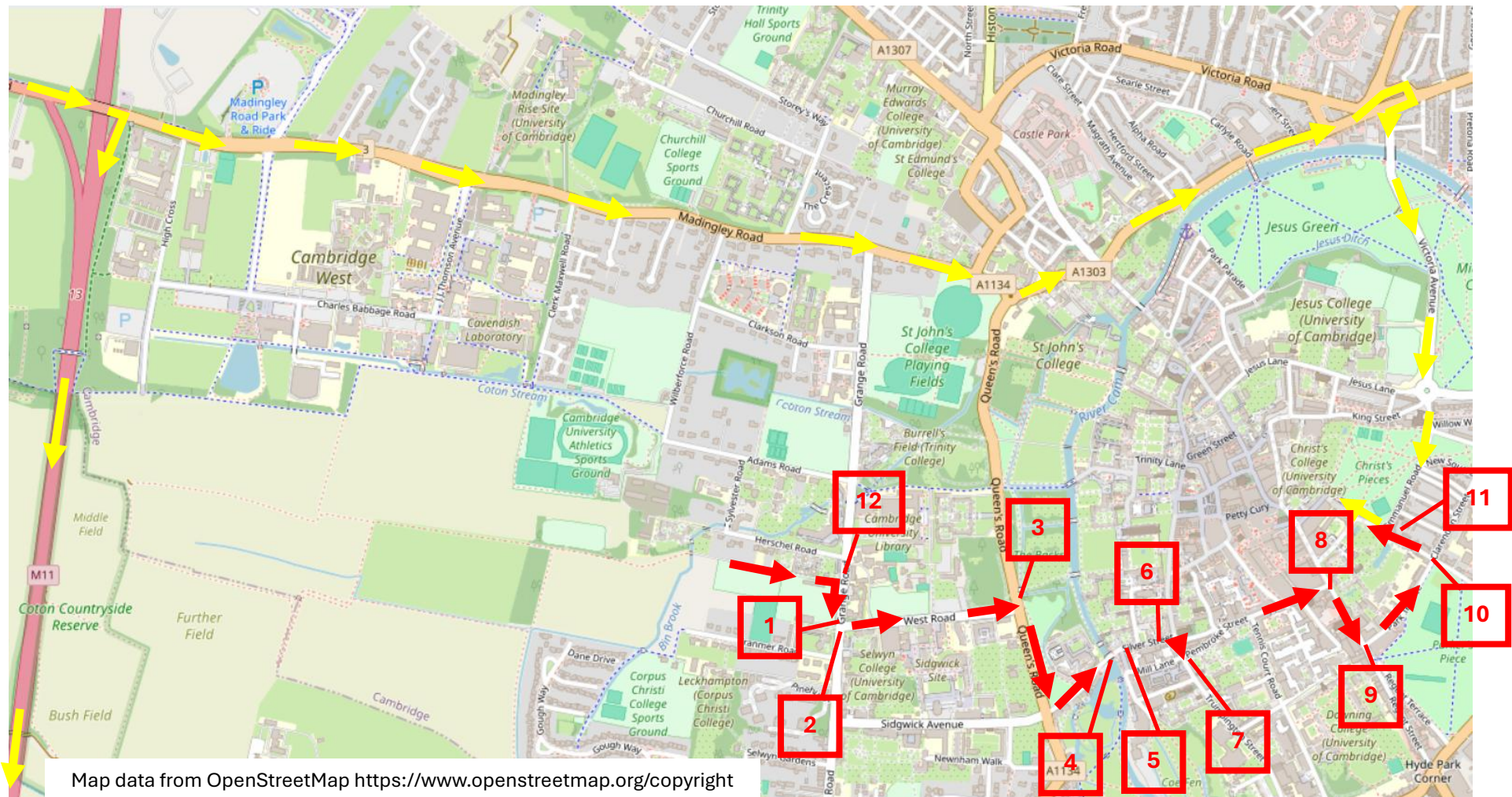
This leads me to my second point, that all these severe detriments of the proposed busway route are completely unnecessary, because there is a very obvious, viable and more cost-effective alternative that has none of these detriments, as proposed by CPPF.

This alternative is to follow the existing A1303 into Cambridge. The whole A1303 route from the A428 junction to the A1134 Queen's Road has sufficient space for a bus lane to be built in at least one direction following the existing road. This bus lane would be most useful in the eastbound direction in the morning, enabling buses to bypass any rush-hour queues into the city – although traffic levels on the Maddingley Road into Cambridge have anyway reduced post-Covid. In some key locations, such as at some traffic-light junctions, there is also space for a westbound bus lane to be constructed as well.

Unlike the Grange Road route proposed by the GCP, the CPPF route along the A1303 has a number of useful interchange points and does not disgorge buses onto a local road heavily used by cyclists, pedestrians, school children and elderly residents. Buses destined for the Addenbrooke's site and Biomedical Campus, where 23,000 people currently work, projected to increase to 46,000 by 2035, could quickly and easily join the M11 from the Maddingley Road at Junction 13 and reach Addenbrooke's via Junction 11, bypassing altogether the narrow city streets with all their hazards. Buses destined for the northern Cambridge Science and Business Parks could use the A428 and A14, further enabling connections with Ely to the north, and likewise bypassing the city streets entirely. Buses destined for the city centre would not need to use the narrow and dangerous route that I have outlined with all its sharp turns and high risk to pedestrians along Silver Street, Trumpington Street, Pembroke Street, St Andrew's Street, Park Terrace and Parker Street, as they would instead use the much wider arterial routes of Northampton Street, Chesterton Road and Victoria Avenue.

It is further obvious that the use of a wide existing route, as the A1303 is, even with the construction of bus lanes, would enable the project to be completed at a tiny fraction of the cost of a new route across virgin countryside with new dedicated bridges and embankments over the motorway and Bin Brook, therefore presenting a much more solid business case for the enhancement of bus transport between Cambourne and Cambridge.

I therefore concur fully with the evidence presented by many other objectors, for example, by Andrew Davidson on 25th September, that the proposed route of the Cambourne-Cambridge busway is not fit for purpose. The many adverse impacts of this proposed route and its associated onward routes cannot be justified when a superior, safer and cheaper alternative route is available following the A1303. The proposed route must be rejected, and the CPPF route properly evaluated.



Key to map:

-  CPPF route via A1303, then via M11 to Addenbrooke's site or via Northampton Street, Chesterton Road, Victoria Avenue to city centre.
-  GCP proposed route via Grange Road, then West Road, Queen's Road, Silver Street, Trumpington Street, Pembroke Street, St Andrew's Street, Park Terrace and Parker Street, with the following hazards:
1. Sharp right-angle turn into Grange Road – local road heavily used by cyclists, pedestrians, school children and elderly residents
 2. Sharp right-angle turn into West Road requiring buses to swing across the central line of both Grange Road and West Road
 3. Sharp right-angle turn into Queen's Road with no traffic lights or roundabout
 4. Honey-pot site of Silver Street Bridge with large numbers of tourists and other pedestrians often in the road
 5. Narrow blind bend used by large numbers of cyclists by the Anchor pub
 6. Narrow street passable in one direction only at a time
 7. Very sharp right-angle turn into Pembroke Street with heavy pedestrian footfall crossing Pembroke Street at the junction
 8. Junction with heavy pedestrian footfall crossing both Pembroke Street and St Andrew's Street
 9. Very sharp right-angle turn into Park Terrace with heavy pedestrian footfall crossing Park Terrace at the junction
 10. Very sharp right-angle turn into Parker Street, requiring buses to swing over the central line of Parker Street
 11. Narrow street with blind turn from Emmanuel Road
 12. Extremely sharp right-angle turn to/from narrow northern section of Grange Road preventing bus use.