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The Cambourne to Cambridge Order

Cambridgeshire County Council

Transport and Works Act 1992

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Inquiry into:

THE CAMBOURNE TO CAMBRIDGE ORDER

SUMMARY OF PROOF OF EVIDENCE

of

Peter Freeman

of Cambridge Growth Company

On behalf of Cambridgeshire County Council

Planning Inspectorate Reference: DPI/E0535/25/1

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Qualifications and Experience

1.1.1 I am Peter Freeman CBE, and I have been appointed by the Minister of State for Housing and Planning to chair the Cambridge Growth Company (CGC). After qualifying as a solicitor, I co-founded the Argent group of Companies in 1981 and remained on their Board until 2024.

1.1.2 From 2020 to 2025, I served as Chair of Homes England, the government's housing and regeneration agency, where I encouraged an increased focus on "place" and regeneration.

1.2 Context of My Evidence

1.2.1 The role, function and purpose of the Cambridge Growth Company

1.2.2 I was initially asked in July 2023 by the then government, in my role as Chair of Homes England, to review the potential for further growth in Cambridge and the obstacles to such growth. In October 2024, the Minister of State for Housing and Planning, reconfirmed my appointment to chair the Cambridge Growth Company (CGC) which has been established to advise on and drive forward the government's growth ambitions for the area.

1.2.3 The success of Greater Cambridge and unlocking economic growth, productivity, housing delivery and infrastructure provision are key, national priorities for the government. Cambridge has untapped economic potential and is a key economic asset for the UK.

1.2.4 The aspiration for an expanded Cambridge is based around well connected, sustainable, urban extensions with quicker journey times, better digital and power connections, a safe and sustainable supply of water, improved access to health and social care services and better air quality.

1.2.5 As chair of the CGC, I am actively engaged with local stakeholders to help fulfil the government's vision for the long-term future of Greater Cambridge –with a strong focus on supporting its communities and ensuring the area's continued success.

1.2.6 The Legal Status and Function of the CGC

1.2.7 The Cambridge Growth Company (CGC) was established as a company limited by guarantee and a subsidiary of Homes England, the government's housing and regeneration agency. The CGC is a government supported, pro-growth company working closely and collaboratively with local elected leaders to help realise the full potential of Cambridge, overcome obstacles to growth and to promote sustainable, infrastructure-led development and economic growth for local residents, communities and businesses.

1.2.8 The Growth Company works with local and central government, convening and leveraging central government resources to promote and unlock key projects and to support local authorities and landowners to deliver the infrastructure needed to help unblock barriers to sustainable growth.

2. MAIN ISSUES FOR THE INSPECTOR RELEVANT TO MY EVIDENCE

2.1 The Cambridge Growth Company's developing strategy for Cambridge

2.1.1 As Cambridge is a national priority, the CGC has been tasked with developing ambitious plan for the housing, transport, water and wider infrastructure that Cambridge needs to realise its full potential, working effectively with local leaders to

build an evidence base to support the development of a long-term strategy that will benefit both the residents of Cambridge and the wider UK economy and also to enable and accelerate developments which align with the government's ambitions for Cambridge and unlock development on stalled sites.

2.1.2 To achieve these aims, it is important to support delivery of planned growth identified in the current Local Plan and the emerging new Local Plan, together with the transport strategies that underpin that growth.

2.1.3 The emerging local plan outlines the opportunities for growth up to 2041 which aims to deliver up to 66,600 jobs and 51,723 homes although this may be updated when the Regulation 18 consultation comes forward.

2.1.4 Government has been clear in instructions to the CGC of the need for an ambitious plan for the housing, transport, water and wider infrastructure that Cambridge needs to realise its full potential. and has therefore committed £10m of funding for preparatory work.

2.2 The Need for the Scheme

2.2.1 While Greater Cambridge is one of the fastest growing and most productive areas in the UK, critical infrastructure challenges, particularly in transport, threaten its competitive advantage in the global high-tech market.

2.2.2 The rapid population and economic growth in Greater Cambridge have placed substantial pressure on existing infrastructure.

2.2.3 Research undertaken by Cambridge Ahead states that if no significant new policy interventions are implemented to address housing and transport gaps in the next decade, employment growth in Greater Cambridge is likely to reverse and decline from 2031 onwards.

2.2.4 There is an existing transport strategy in place through the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan that needs to be delivered to promote safe, integrated and efficient transport provision which will help deliver the growth proposed in the existing Local Plan. The Cambourne to Cambridge proposal (CtoC) is part of that existing transport strategy and has been developed and promoted by the GCP since 2014.

2.2.5 The CtoC (mainly) segregated busway will provide linkage to Cambridge for the thousands of homes and jobs planned in this important growth corridor including Bourne Airfield. This would be available in the short term whilst longer term proposals for wider transport solutions are being explored. Additional analytical work is underway, building on what has already been completed, to assess the feasibility of integrating the busways into a long-term solution. The CtoC scheme could play a complementary role in this – for example, it could be possible to repurpose busways to other modes of transport in the future. Without delivery of CtoC, new growth in this corridor will be restricted and may not proceed. This would impact on delivery against the Local Plan and investor confidence in the area.

2.2.6 National government support for busways and wider services as sustainable transport has recently been demonstrated in the spending review which included support via funding and policy measures.

2.3 Alignment with CGC High Level Principles

2.3.1 The Growth Company will start detailed transport work to support a coordinated approach across transport, housing and employment, helping to align investment and policy decisions for Greater Cambridge's long-term success.

2.3.2 Transport work has also started to explore the analytical case for a mass rapid transit solution to serve the growth of Greater Cambridge and develop the most appropriate long term transport solutions.

2.3.3 Whilst the emerging Local Plan concludes and the CGC evidence base develops, it is important to maintain momentum on existing schemes and growth corridors already identified in the current adopted Local Plan. This includes delivery of CtoC in support of those growth corridors and specifically the Bourn Airfield development.

2.4 Alignment with CGC Priorities

2.4.1 One of the Priorities of the CGC is development acceleration (enable and accelerate developments which align with the government's ambitions for Cambridge and unlock development on stalled sites).

2.4.2 To accelerate and unblock we need the Local Plan to continue to deliver and allocated development land in advance of the CGC evidence base being developed. The CtoC scheme specifically helps to achieve that by unlocking growth at Bourn Airfield which has stalled whilst the provision of public transport has been debated.

2.4.3 It will also help to create capacity to enable further growth as envisaged in the First Proposals for the Local Plan.

2.5 Synergy With Other Schemes Under Consideration

2.5.1 The growth in this area will be further supported by EWR in the future as the proposals develop for a station around the Cambourne area which will unlock the opportunity for more housing and jobs. However, EWR will not deliver growth envisaged the current Local Plan nor the early years of the emerging Local Plan, and CtoC will complement EWR by providing first/last mile connectivity to development sites not served by rail. EWR will provide a link to Cambridge South station and then onto Cambridge station but will not provide improved access to Cambridge West or Cambridge centre generally.

3. CONCLUSIONS

3.1.1 In presenting my evidence I have addressed Matter 1, the need for the scheme, by outlining the following:

- The role, function and purpose of the Cambridge Growth Company.
- The Cambridge Growth Company's developing strategy for Cambridge
- The role of (and need for) the CtoC scheme in order to deliver the growth ambitions for Cambridge

3.1.2 Through that discussion I have also provided evidence that may support Matter 6, the justification of CPO powers. In doing so I have set out the following points:

- The UK Government has been clear in instructions to the CGC and to me that ambitious growth is envisaged in order to maximise the economic growth of Cambridge.
- It is important to maintain momentum on existing schemes and growth corridors already identified in the current adopted Local Plan, which is in line with the governments ambition for this area. This includes delivery of CtoC in support of those growth corridors.