

Dr J. T. GREEN (Queens' College):

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, I agree that, as the Notice states, a 'busway will provide a much-needed and desired public transport option to Cambridge West' and that as such it 'aligns with the University's vision for the site'. The main three options for the route of a busway have been discussed for many years: one off-road, one on-road (dual bound), and another on-road (inbound only) option added later (alongside several variants of these which were dismissed over time). The off-road option requires the use of this land for which approval for disposal is sought.

All options are well known to the University through the work of the Strategic Projects group within the Estates Division and through the University's (non-voting) membership of the Greater Cambridge Partnership over many years. There is a huge amount of information in the public domain which has been accumulated by the GCP¹ and others over the ten or so years that this project has been under consideration. This includes much credible information and data supporting the inbound on-road option as a simpler, cheaper and environmentally more sustainable solution, including reports from Cambridge Past Present & Future (CPPF) in 2021² and from Mott MacDonald (MM) in 2019.³ Either of the extant on-road options can provide access to the University's West Cambridge site for bus passengers (as can the off-road) by utilising current routes through the site as does the U bus.

The University has supported the off-road option for many years and, as mentioned in this Notice, taken steps 'to actively promote the route through the site'. For example, at a meeting of the GCP Executive back in July 2021, the University's member stated that the University supported the off-road solution rather than the on-road solution and spoke to justify the resultant transection of the greenbelt⁴ whilst accepting the environmental impact as inevitable. At that meeting the GCP decided to approve (only) the off-road solution⁵ and accordingly submitted their report⁶ to a meeting of the Cambridgeshire County Council in March 2023 recommending that the GCP's proposal for the off-road option be agreed (and taken forward for an order authorising its construction). The CCC after a long debate agreed the GCP's proposal, despite an amendment being tabled even as late as this in process, which repeated hitherto ignored

¹ <https://www.greatercambridge.org.uk/sustainable-transport-programme/public-transport-schemes/cambourne-to-cambridge>.

² <https://www.greatercambridge.org.uk/asset-library/Sustainable-Transport/Public-Transport/Cambourne-to-Cambridge/Independent-Audit/Submissions/First-Batch/250221-Cambridge-PPF.pdf>.

³ <https://www.greatercambridge.org.uk/asset-library/Sustainable-Transport/Public-Transport/Cambourne-to-Cambridge/C2C-LLF/C2C-LLF-Technical-Note-Madingley-Road-Quick-Wins-14-05-2019.pdf>.

⁴ See the video recording of the Greater Cambridge Partnership Executive Board meeting of 1 July 2021, on the GCP YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4nPewwgf7Lk>, at 4:21:00.

⁵ See the Decision Summary for the meeting of 1 July 2021 of the Greater Cambridge Partnership Executive Board, available on the Cambridgeshire County Council's CMIS site, https://cambridgeshire.cmis.uk.com/ccc_live/Home.aspx.

⁶ See pages 19–46 of the Agenda document for the County Council meeting of 21 March 2023, available on the Cambridgeshire County Council's CMIS site, https://cambridgeshire.cmis.uk.com/ccc_live/Home.aspx.

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requests for an impartial evaluation of the inbound on-road and the off-road option.⁷ This decision by the CCC was far from evidence-based.

The GCP Chair put the GCP's proposal to the CCC beginning 'you have been lied to'⁸ and later, in summarising the debate, stated that she had become 'intolerant of falsehoods being ~~offered uttered~~'.⁹ Yet the GCP Chair ~~has continuously~~ repeated the GCP 'mantra'¹⁰ that the GCP ~~hads~~ properly assessed the alternatives citing the GCP commissioned audit of May 2021 by Amey Consulting.¹¹ In the meeting, the Chair of the GCP repeats the ~~claim~~ claim that it is 'false' to say that 'no-one has ever ~~properly-directly~~ compared the on-road route ~~with-to~~ the ~~proposed~~ off-road route'.¹² At the end of the debate one Councillor ~~rehearses-the~~ ~~states~~ states that 'the on-road route has been ~~thoroughly~~ examined over many years and would ~~itself~~ have a significant impact on trees'.¹³ ~~s~~Some on-road options have been examined but not the inbound on-road option which the CPPF proposed.

Tangled up within these discussions has been the effect on Madingley Wood, a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and on the American Cemetery which has been referred to many times as a reason why 'an on-road solution' would not work. This claim has been made by the GCP and its Chair¹⁴ who stated that it is 'false' to claim that 'the on-road route would not result in the removal of any trees'.¹⁵ That is misleading: both the 2019 MM² and the 2021 CPPF³ reports concluded that an inbound on-road busway could be accommodated without any take of land or impact on these sites, such as the removal of trees.

An independent *report* (an examination of facts leading to conclusions or recommendations) is very different to an *audit* (an examination of whether or not due process has been followed by an organisation). The Amey audit does *not* evaluate the inbound on-road option but audits the GCP's governance of the process, as indeed the audit states: 'the remit of this audit is not to evaluate the merits or otherwise of specific route alignments'¹⁶ the University's member similarly explained its purpose to the GCP Executive as so.¹⁷ No GCP report has concluded that the inbound on-road option would 'result in the removal of any trees'.

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⁷ See the Minutes of the County Council meeting of 21 March 2023, available on the Cambridgeshire County Council's CMIS site, https://cambridgeshire.cmis.uk.com/ccs_live/Home.aspx.

⁸ See the videorecording of the Cambridgeshire County Council meeting of 21 March 2023, on the CCC's YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iwbAi8Q9e5Q>, at 1:40:45.

⁹ *Ibid* at 2:27:48.

¹⁰ *Ibid* at 43:09, 43:28, 36:20, 47:20 and 52:57, etc.

¹¹ *Independent Audit of Key Assumptions and Constraints: Cambourne to Cambridge Better Public Transport Project*, dated 25 May 2021, by Amey Consulting, available from the GCP website at <https://www.greatercambridge.org.uk/asset-library/Sustainable-Transport/Public-Transport/Cambourne-to-Cambridge/Independent-Audit/C2C-Independent-Audit-Final.pdf>.

¹² See the videorecording of the Cambridgeshire County Council meeting of 21 March 2023, on the CCC's YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iwbAi8Q9e5Q>, at 2:27:55.

¹³ *Ibid* at 2:25:55.

¹⁴ *Ibid* at 36:20.

¹⁵ *Ibid* 2:28:05.

¹⁶ See the Amey Consulting audit report (footnote 11 above), at section 6.1.

¹⁷ See the video recording of the Greater Cambridge Partnership Executive Board meeting of 1 July 2021, on the GCP YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4nPewwgf7Lk>, at 4:21:48.

Why does the GCP continue to refuse to commission an independent *report* to evaluate the off-road together with the inbound on-road (as they have done for dual bound on-road and off-road)? Instead the Chair ~~continues to~~ claimed (as noted above)¹⁸ that the Amey *audit* is sufficient to justify their rejection of the inbound on-road option (whilst the audit report itself states within it, that it didn't evaluate that option at all).

~~Many statements made to the CCC (and indeed to the GCP including by its Chair) are to: indeed they were~~ ~~The 55 Councillors were, at GCP Chair's own admission:~~ ~~or, if not, certainly confused including by the GCP Chair.~~ Over many years there have been endless reports, confusing terminology and ambiguous use of the term 'on-road busway' thereby obfuscating which option is being addressed at any time. How could Councillors be expected to distil the truth from the mountain of ambiguous evidence? As ~~one~~ Councillor ~~summed it up~~ felt compelled to speak because: 'there is so much misinformation going on'.¹⁹

And why does this matter to the University? Because the Notice and decision before us comes as the result of the above flawed processes within other bodies (the GCP and CCC), one of which the University has Board membership of.

The University now has to make a decision on a matter consequent upon all this. The University must not be complicit and similarly misled; it must take an evidence-based decision using our well-established principles and processes of good governance.

How can the University continue to 'actively promote' and facilitate an option which will lead to the destruction of acres of land with a colossal, well-evidenced environmental impact, which is opposed by a large number of the University's external stakeholders²⁰ and do so without first seeking an independent analysis to evaluate all the factors between the off-road and inbound on-road options? The inbound on-road option leaves the green belt untouched, is environmentally sustainable and delivers the University's desired aim of access to West Cambridge (and is also cheaper).

The University's *Environmental Policy*²¹ published in 2023 'applies to all aspects of the University's estate ... and to a range of stakeholders'. It commits to ensuring that the University:

- 'protects and enhances the natural environment' ... 'by having positive direct and indirect impacts on biodiversity and natural ecosystems';
- 'reduces the environmental sustainability impacts of its construction and refurbishment projects'; and
- 'provides ... sustainable travel options'

In summary, over many years the University has relentlessly pursued the off-road option, dismissing and ignoring options put forward by other credible stakeholders who have sought for an independent enquiry into the relative merits of each of the off-road and on-road inbound options. One of the underlying principles of a university is to be an organisation whose decisions and outputs are based upon evidence-based principles – why not so here?

¹⁸ See the videorecording of the Cambridgeshire County Council meeting of 21 March 2023, on the CCC's YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iwbAi8Q9e5Q>, at 43:09.

¹⁹ *Ibid* at 1:20:00.

²⁰ See for example the Cambridge Past, Present & Future campaign pages at <https://www.cambridgeppf.org/Pages/Category/campaigns>.

²¹ Available at https://www.environment.admin.cam.ac.uk/files/environmental_policy_2023_2024_logo.pdf.

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I urge the University to pause before proceeding and

- to reflect hard on their current approach of promoting and facilitating one option without an evidence base, the provenance of which option is questionable, one which is contrary to their published values, and one which ignores the views of many stakeholders;
- to take serious note of the huge amount of environmental data cautioning against an off-road busway;
- to commission, contrary to its position to date and with or without the agreement of the Greater Cambridge Partnership, an independent report which assesses the off-road and the inbound on-road options for a busway including in terms of relative costs and environmental impact;
- and for the University to abide by its principles (as exemplified in its Environmental Policy) and grasp this opportunity to demonstrate that we practise what we preach.