TTWA application by Cambridgeshire county Council: Cambridge South East Transport (CSET)

Application under the provisions of section 6 of the Transport and Works Act 1992 for an Order authorising the construction and operation of a guided transport system from the A11 to the Cambridge Biomedical Campus; and Seeking of a direction from the Secretary of State under Section 90(2A) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 that planning permission be deemed to be granted for the development provided for in the proposed Order for the CSET2 Scheme.

Anthony Orgee – personal response

Summary recommendation

I **oppose** this application by Cambridgeshire County Council for a TWA Order. In my opinion, the application represents poor value for money, would result in the unnecessary loss of agricultural land and would have a negative impact on the Green Belt. The siting of the Park & Ride site needs further consideration. In addition construction as proposed could limit future strategic rail improvements. I also consider that there is a viable alternative that, whilst not having these drawbacks, could be delivered in a more timely manner.

I am not sure that appropriate account has been taken of changing working patterns following after the Covid pandemic and the increasing importance of work/life balance.

I have amplified these reasons for my recommendation in the response below, and have included Annex A detailing all the documents referred to in my response.

Poor value for money

The subsequent GCP Cambridge South East Transport Study (formerly known as the A1307 Three Campuses to Cambridge) consultation which ended on 9 April 2018 set out three strategies:

1 Mass Rapid Transport Route: a dedicated route between the A11 and the Cambridge Biomedical Campus (CBC) via Sawston, Stapleford and Great Shelford
2 Bus lanes along A1307 and public transport link to CBC
3 Bus lanes along A1307.

Strategy 1 is 100% off highway. Strategy 2 is 75% on highway and 25% off highway and Strategy 3 100% on highway. The on highway section from Babraham Research Campus to the Babraham Road Park & Ride site being common to both strategies 2 and 3

The consultation document included estimated costs and benefits for each strategy. These are set out below in Table 1

Table 1 (

	Strategy 1 (£m)	Strategy 2 (£m)	Strategy 3 (£m)
Estimated costs	130 - 145	42 - 46	39 - 44
Estimated benefits	280 - 320	165 - 180	145.-165

The figures in this table can be used to calculate Worse case / best case benefit / cost ratios. These are:

Strategy 1	1.93 – 2.46
Strategy 2	3.58 – 4.28
Strategy 3	3.29 – 4.23

The Greater Cambridge Partnership's Executive Board agreed to adopt Strategy 1, the off road strategy, as its preferred strategy for the A1307 corridor at its meeting held on 11 October 2018, although the consultation documentation indicated that it had the lowest BCR of any of the three strategies.

It is interesting to compare the value of the BCR now set out in the County Council's CSET application documentation with that for a Bus Rapid Transport (BRT) scheme set out in the A1307 Haverhill to Cambridge Corridor Draft Concepts Report by WSP Parsons Brinckerhoff (January 2016). The later was described as follows: 'this option [i.e the BRT] was discounted due to its low value of 1.27 which represented low value for money'.

It should also be noted that at subsequent meetings of the CSET Local Liaison Forum, the BCR figure of 0.71 for CSET was used on more than one occasion. Not surprisingly this was a serious and on-going concern for the LLF.

The siting of the Park & Ride site needs further consideration

Whilst the proposed site of the Park & Ride site might well be appropriate for those travelling to and working at the Cambridge Biomedical Campus, it is not ideally sited for Granta Park or the Babraham Research Campus.

The proposed P & R site is a kilometre from Granta Park and accessed at present by a sub-optimal section of cycleway (very narrow and stepped access to the footbridge over the A11) and whilst both these issues can be addressed the distance is still a matter for concern. By way of comparison I believe that there is an aspiration in Cambridge City that no one should be more than 400 metres from a bus stop. A daily walk of a kilometre may well be off putting particularly in inclement weather.

By way of alternatives, the Stagecoach Service 13 which runs along the A1307 and goes through Little and Great Abington has a bus stop only about 100 metres from the High Street, Great Abington, entrance to Granta Park.

The Babraham Research Campus (BRC) is also, in my view, poorly served by the proposed P & R site. The proposed P & R site is several hundred metres from the entrance to the

BRC whereas both of the two bus stops on the A1307(one very close to the Babraham crossroads and the other near the relatively new roundabout with access road to BRC) are much closer to BRC.

In both cases an improved and reliable bus service along the A1307 might meet travel arrangements to these two significant centres of employment better than the proposed and more remote P & R site.

Future strategic rail improvements

In recent years there have been a number of significant rail improvements, including re-opening lines closed years ago. Haverhill is one of the largest towns in the UK without a rail connection and has expanded considerably in recent years, and continues to expand.. Re-opening this line has been raised on a number of occasions. Some see such a re-opening as part of a wider whole with Haverhill further connected to the south east to form a new strategic railway route.

Constructing the off highway bus route as proposed in this application could be a barrier to such a re-opening, particularly in the area close to the north-eastern side of Sawston.

Loss of agricultural land
Negative impact on the Green Belt
A possible alternative route

Threse three issues are intertwined since without any possible alternative route, one might have to accept the application as submitted with loss of agricultural land and a negative impact on the Green Belt..

I believe that there is such an alternative – an on highway route between Fourwentways and the Addenbrooke's Hospital / Cambridge Biomedical Campus.

There are already four sections (some very short) of two lane carriageway on this route: north of Fourwentways, at the entrance to the roundabout at the northern road entrance to the Babraham Research Campus, over the Gogs and at the entrance to the roundabout at Shelford Bottom. Costings for some improvements to the road were given at the GCP – CSET Liaison Forum workshop held on 20 June 2017, and at least one of these - creating a bus only lane from the Cambridge side of Babraham crossroads to the Fourwentways roundabout – has already been actioned. The cost of converting the dual carriageway over the Gogs to a bus lane and one all purpose traffic lane in each direction is a simple and relatively inexpensive, and coupled with widening the road to make a complete bus only lane in each direction between Shelford Bottom roundabout and Fourwentways would be less expensive, would reduce the need to concrete over agricultural land, would not need any expensive bridge construction and have a much less negative impact on the Green Belt than the detailed scheme set out in this application.

The section of the route between the Shelford Bottom roundabout and Addenbrooke's Hospital / CBC could be addressed by the off highway proposal put forward in previous consultations in August 2016 and April 2018, and in linking up with the Addenbrooke's / CBC road system easily connect to the new Cambridge South station.

Changing patterns of work and Work/life balance

I am not sure that appropriate account has been taken of changing working patterns following after the Covid pandemic and the increasing importance of a work/life balance. Living close to Granta Park and its expanding workforce, it is noticeable that fewer cars seem to be travelling to the site each day now compared with, say, 2019 pre-pandemic. Bearing in mind working from home coupled with moves towards four-day working weeks, it is not easy to predict what working patterns will be like in, say, five or ten years time, and hence difficult t plan ahead with certainty.

Thank you for considering my response.

Anthony Orgee

[redacted]

7 March 2025

Annex A

Greater Cambridge Partnership Cambridge South East Transport Study (formerly known as the A1307 Three Campuses to Cambridge) consultation leaflet. Consultation period extended to 9 April 2018

WSP Parsons Brinckerhoff *A1307 Haverhill to Cambridge Corridor. Draft Concepts Report.* Public January 2016

Greater Cambridge Partnership - CSET Liaison Forum workshop 20 June 2017 documentation

Greater Cambridge Partnership Executive Board, 11 October 2018, agenda and minutes