



Secretary of State for Transport
Transport Infrastructure Planning Unit,
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR

08 January 2025

Dear Heidi,

RE: Concerns Regarding the Proposed Busway in Cambourne to Cambridge Area

I am writing to represent the concerns of my constituents regarding the application for a new bus route, paths and transport hub in the A428 and A1303 Cambourne to Cambridge area, to be considered under the Transport and Works Act 1992.

There is an urgent imperative to deliver the much-needed public transport links for young people and families in Cambourne and other communities in our area whilst also protecting the character of our villages and conserving our precious environment in South Cambridgeshire.

The need to find and demonstrate a balance between these often-competing priorities is particularly important when considering the proposed busway. Constituents whom I have spoken to or have contacted me about these proposals have highlighted the dire need for improved transport links between Cambourne and Cambridge. The lack of public transport is leaving people isolated and is particularly impacting young people and their post-16 opportunities, including their option of sixth-form and technical colleges, and opportunities for apprenticeships or jobs. Clean, green travel that is reliable, fast and affordable is key to improving access to education and jobs, as well as meeting climate targets.

At the same time, many constituents have contacted me with significant concerns regarding the environmental impacts of the busway. I acknowledge and appreciate the adjustments that have already been made to the proposed route to avoid impacts on the precious ancient Madingley Wood, a highly sensitive SSSI, as well as to avoid impacts to the Cambridge American Cemetery and Memorial - both important designated sites which must be protected. I also note many other environmental mitigations that are described in the Environmental Impact Assessment and the report on responses to the consultations.

However, substantial concerns remain on the impacts to wildlife habitats, particularly with regards to the off-road section of the proposed busway between the East of Hardwick Village and Grange Road in Cambridge (Proposed Site Plans sheets 10-13) and the route through traditional orchard habitat at Coton Orchard.

There have been multiple public meetings at which different evidence has been presented by campaign organisations, local communities and the Greater Cambridge Partnership regarding the viability of an alternative route through this section. Given the level of public concern and the potential impacts to wildlife habitat, I would like to request that a public inquiry be held into the process for decision-making regarding the options for this section of the route. It is vital to ensure full transparency in the process and secure greater public confidence as it moves forward.

It is critically important that the Planning Inspectorate, and therefore the public, can be fully assured that all options for this transport link have been thoroughly considered and assessed and that the balance between societal and environmental concerns has been adequately achieved. We need to see that all steps possible have been taken to avoid and reduce damage to wildlife habitats and the environment. If there are possible changes to the route in this section that could minimise harm to wildlife habitat, including the number of trees affected in and around Coton Orchard, these should be the focus of the public inquiry to ensure that due process has been undertaken and all evidence considered properly and that all negotiations have been undertaken to find a balance. All this information should be firmly in the public domain.

I sincerely hope that my concerns will be relayed to the Planning Inspectorate and that it can be ensured that the public inquiry works towards a final outcome that achieves the most optimal balance between societal needs for improved transport links and environmental sustainability and nature recovery.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Pippa', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Pippa Heylings MP

Member of Parliament for South Cambridgeshire