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W1-1 Proof Of Evidence of Peter Leaver BA(Hons) DipLD CMLI on Landscape Matters.

TRANSPORT AND WORKS ACT 1992: THE PROPOSED CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL AND GREATER CAMBRIDGE PARTNERSHIP, CAMBRIDGE SOUTH EAST TRANSPORT ORDER ('CSET2') Ref. TWA/25/APP/01

Client: BW4B - BETTER WAYS FOR BUSWAYS

Ref: 2964 RDJWL-XX-XX-RP-L-0038



View from Magog Downs towards Cambridge

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1.0 Introduction

1.1.1 This proof of evidence has been prepared by Peter Leaver, a chartered landscape architect. I hold a BA (hons) in landscape design and a postgraduate diploma in landscape architecture from Manchester Polytechnic. I was elected a member of the Landscape Institute in 1989. I worked from 1989 to 1997 for Bristol City Council, where my duties included preparing assessments of the landscape impact of planning applications for the City Council development control team. Between 1997 and 2025 I was a director of David Wilson Partnership Limited, working as a landscape architect for a wide range of public and private sector clients. I have prepared statements and given evidence at appeal in relation to a range of development types. I have prepared landscape character assessments as an evidence base in the preparation of policies on the Coast and Estuary Zone and Rural Gaps which now form part of the adopted North Devon and Torridge Local Plan. I led the work on a landscape sensitivity study for Copeland District Council, as part of the evidence base for the local plan review. Between 2010 and 2024 I advised the North Devon Coast AONB Partnership (Now the National Landscape) on landscape matters, for whom I have given written and oral evidence at appeal on landscape and visual matters. I have also prepared landscape and visual impact assessments for a range of development types, to support planning appeals, planning applications and HELAA submissions.

1.1.2 The evidence which I have prepared and provided for this appeal is true and is prepared with regard to the Landscape Institute technical and professional standards. I confirm that the opinions expressed are my true and professional opinions.

1.1.3 This proof of evidence considers the landscape and visual effects of the CSET promoted route and compares those to the BW4B alternative proposal. It considers issues relating to openness of the Green Belt and a number of technical concerns

relating to the method used in the submission ES for assessing landscape and visual effects.

2.0 The Submitted Environmental Statement

2.1.1 Chapter 11 of the ES (CD1-10-02) covers the landscape and visual impact assessment of the CSET proposed route. In carrying out an independent verification of the landscape and visual effects reported, I have considered both the methodology at 11.3 of the ES and the baseline conditions described at section 11.4. In my judgement, the methodology does not allow for robust and independent assessment, and the baseline is not clear and transparent.

2.1.2 I raised queries on both the methodology and the baseline information upon which the ES is based in early October 2026. Responses were partial and, on November 5th, the Applicant let me have sight of a draft update to the ES, which contains a revised methodology used for assessment of landscape and visual effects, a new landscape baseline, changed assessment of landscape and visual sensitivity and changed assessment of landscape and visual magnitude of change and overall effects. From their actions, it seems reasonable, in my view, to assume that the Applicant has realised that the original ES was deficient and has sought to rectify those deficiencies.

2.1.3 Given that the amended ES was received only very shortly before the deadline for submission of proofs, I have not had an opportunity to address it in my proof of evidence. An extension of time was requested and refused, so I will now be obliged to address the updated evidence by way of a rebuttal proof of evidence. My proof is based on the information submitted in the original ES and material previously submitted.

2.2 Methodological Inconsistencies

2.2.1 **Assessment of landscape value** –The assessment of landscape value (ES table 11.2) identifies a range of criteria used for making a judgement on landscape value. No reference is made to Assessing Landscape Value Outside National Designations published by the Landscape Institute (LI TGN 02/21), although the criteria fit roughly within the range of factors recommended in LI TGN 02/21 – namely natural and cultural heritage, landscape condition, associations, landscape distinctiveness, recreational opportunities, scenic and tranquillity perceptual qualities and functional factors.

2.2.2 **Assessment of Landscape Sensitivity**: ES 11.3.7 notes that judgements on landscape sensitivity (i.e. the nature of the receptor) are derived by combining judgements on landscape quality and landscape value. This approach is not consistent with the guidance set out in GLVIA3, which (at 3.26) emphasises that judgements on landscape sensitivity should be made by combining judgements of landscape value and the susceptibility of the landscape ***to the type of change arising from the specific proposal.*** This is an important distinction, as different key characteristics and qualities of the landscape can be more or less susceptible to different types of change or development. GLVIA3 paras 5.40 – 5.43 set out the rationale behind this approach, noting at 5.42 that "landscape effects in LVIA are particular to both the specific landscape in question and the specific nature of the proposed development, the assessment of susceptibility must be tailored to the project".

2.2.3 **Assessment of visual sensitivity**. Para 11.3.11 notes that "the sensitivity of each viewpoint considers the value of the view from a specific viewpoint, the scenic qualities of the view and the likely number of viewers". Table 11.4 sets out criteria for determining value of views, but there is no indication of how value is combined with judgements on scenic quality and number of viewers to arrive at an assessment of sensitivity. There is

no summary of criteria for determining visual receptor sensitivity as there is for landscape.

2.2.4 Table ES 11.8 includes a judgement on view value (final column), and these correspond with judgements on visual receptor sensitivity in tables ES11.9 – 11.10 – but with no explanation of how scenic quality and number of viewers have been considered. In my judgement, little faith can be put in the assessments of view value in table ES11.8, based on the criteria set out in table 11.4. Virtually all of the views are assessed as being of "High" value. The criteria for "high" value at table 11.4 are *"Viewpoints within landscapes of international / national importance, or popular visitor attractions where the view is an important part of the experience".* Taking as an example VPs 13 and 14, on the edge of the residential part of Hinton Way. Undoubtedly a pleasant residential location with, as stated in table 11.8, *typical components of the rural landscape including farmland, hedgerows and woodland with few discordant elements*, but not a viewpoint that meets the exacting criteria for a "high" value view as set out in table ES11.4.

2.2.5 **Range of landscape and visual sensitivity criteria**: ES table 11.3 lists a word scale of landscape sensitivity ranging from High, Medium, Low. The criteria for determining significance (ES table 11.6) includes a Very High and a Negligible receptor sensitivity criteria. It is important for decision makers to be aware that a "High" sensitivity assessment for a particular receptor does not denote the very highest level of sensitivity possible.

2.2.6 Landscape Magnitude of change criteria. The ES contains no criteria for assessing magnitude of change for landscape effects (similar to table ES 11.5 for visual effects).

I queried this and have been directed[1] to the scoping report issued in 2020 (CD1-10.11 appendix 51 section 11.4. PDF pp72 – 75) which includes at table 11.3 a range of criteria for assessing magnitude of change that are set out coherently and take account of the size or scale of change, its geographical extent and duration as recommended at paras 5.48 – 5.52 of GLVIA3.

2.2.7 Section 11.4 of CD1-10.11 (ES scoping report) sets out a methodology for assessment of landscape and visual receptor sensitivity and magnitude of change that are in line with the criteria suggested in GLVIA3. The methodology is complete and does not contain the inconsistencies noted in the methodology used in the submitted ES.

Why does this matter?

2.2.8 There is a consistency between the recognised guidance on preparing landscape and visual impact assessment (GLVIA3) and the methodology for LVIA set out in the ES scoping report (CD1-10.11). This consistency has not been carried through into the methodology for the LVIA included at chapter 11 of the ES. In my judgement, the assessments made on receptor sensitivity, magnitude of change and therefore overall effect and significance of effects are not clear and transparent, because of these inconsistencies in methodology.

2.3 Baseline

2.3.1 The assessment of landscape character (and consideration of green belt issues) do not rely on the latest and most appropriate baseline sources.

2.3.2 GLVIA3 provides the basis for landscape and visual impact assessment. It recommends the use of existing landscape character assessments, including local

[1] email Jo Baker to PL 19/10/26 – *"These criteria are set out in Table 11.3 of the CSET Phase 2 Environmental Scoping Report November 2024 which formed Appendix 5.1 of the ES"*

authority assessments, which provide more detail than the broader scale, national and regional assessments[2]. GLVIA3 recommends that existing LCAs should be reviewed in relation to its age, status, scale and level of detail and any other matter that affects its usefulness. The ES at para 11.3.4 lists baseline sources, including the 2021 Greater Cambridge Landscape Character Assessment (GCLCA - CD15.03). The GCLCA appears to have been carried out in line with the recommendations of Natural England guidance[3], including description of key characteristics, key sensitivities and guidance for landscape management and integrating development into the landscape. The GCLCA is part of the evidence base for the emerging local plan[4].

2.3.3 The GCLCA divides the greater Cambridge area into Landscape Character Types (LCTs) and within them discrete Landscape Character Areas (LCAs). The CSET route runs predominantly across two of these LCAs, LCA 3D (Cam and Granta Tributaires Lowland Farmland) and LCA9D (Grant River Valley).

2.3.4 The CSET route runs predominantly through an area of lowland farmland (LCT3/LCA3D), where key landscape sensitivities include a sense of rural tranquillity and a green corridor that connects Cambridge to the surrounding countryside. Unlike the assessment used for the ES, the GCLCA recognises a variation in the character of the landscape locally and describes a separate landscape character type, River Valleys (LCT9/LCA9A), through which parts of the route run south east of Babraham and south east of Sawston. Characteristics and sensitivities of the river valley landscape include strong rural character, reinforced by a strong sense of enclosure. A sense of tranquillity away from main roads and a sense of separation from villages in neighbouring

[2] GLVIA3 CD15.01 paras 5.4, 5.12-5.15

[3]Reference guidance docs and GCLCA chapter on methodology
[4] reference

farmland. These key characteristics and sensitivities are missed in the brief description of landscape character included at table 11.7 of the ES. The differentiation between the farmland and river valley landscapes is not identified.

2.3.5 The ES foregoes use of the GCLCA, instead it relies upon a 2021 Consideration of Green Belt Issues Study (although this reference has now been amended to the 2020 study[5]). That document is a study that considers potential options for the alignment of a stretch of the proposed public transport link (CSET busway). It appears to rely on the Cambridgeshire Landscape Character Assessment of 2003 that is out of date and is no longer readily available to view.

Why does this matter?

2.3.6 **Suitability for LVIA purposes**: The baseline landscape character assessment upon which the ES is based is the March 2020 Consideration of Green belt Issues (CD1-15.03). This document does not appear to have been prepared in accordance with either the Natural England guidance (2014) nor the predecessor document (Countryside Agency 2003). Its scope is limited to an assessment of the effect of the proposal on Green Belt purposes. It is not an assessment of landscape characteristics, qualities and sensitivities suitable for LVIA. The document itself contains little directly relevant material against which landscape receptor sensitivity or the effects of change from the proposal can be judged. There is a relevant, up to date (2021) landscape character assessment (GCLCA CD15.03) that provides a suitable and agreed baseline. It is a more robust basis from which to make assessments of landscape sensitivity and

[5] email Jo Baker to PL 19/10/26 – "*There are two Green Belt Assessments that LDA prepared – from 2020 and 2024. (The reference to 2021 should refer to 2020) The CD refs are as follows:*

- *CD1-15.03 Appendix B Consideration of Green Belt Issues Report*
- *CD1-15.04 Appendix C Consideration of Green Belt Issues*"

"

against which to judge the effects of landscape change.

2.3.7 **Local landscape variations:** The GCLCA recognises variations in landscape character and quality along the route of the proposed busway, in particular between the settled lowland farmland and unsettled, intimate river valleys. It provides a sufficiently detailed baseline from which assessments of landscape sensitivity and landscape magnitude of change can be made.

2.3.8 **Landscape Sensitivity**: The GCLCA describes the key characteristics of the landscape, evaluates key landscape sensitivities which provide a framework for informing landscape sensitivity assessments of potential changes from specific development types or land management practices[6]. Strength of character[7] is connected to distinctiveness and landscape integrity. It is based on judgements about how distinct and recognisable the pattern of physical and cultural attributes is that defines the character of the landscape, and the sense of place that they evoke. Using professional judgement, strength of character is defined on a three-point scale of **weak**, **moderate** or **strong**, as evaluated within the character descriptions. Landscape condition is defined on a three-point scale of **poor**, **moderate** or **good**.

2.3.9 The GCLCA contains guidance on landscape management[8] which can help inform proposals for mitigation. The guidance falls into the categories of conserve, enhance or restore. Landscapes worthy of conservation are "*Landscapes of strong character in good condition and therefore judged to be of high quality where emphasis should be on conservation of existing character and of particular features that contribute to this*

[6] Greater Cambridge Landscape Character Assessment part A 4.2.3 p31.
[7] Greater Cambridge Landscape Character Assessment part A 4.2 p31
[8] Greater Cambridge Landscape Character Assessment part A 4.3 p32

character. The aim should be to continue the current landscape management regimes and adopt best practice approaches. Great care will need to be taken in the introduction of new characteristics"

2.3.10 **Guidance on Conservation and Enhancement of Landscape Character**: The GCLCA goes on to recommend landscape management objectives and guidelines[9] Management objectives "represent different management strategies ranging from conservation of the current landscape in areas of strong character and good condition, to encouraging positive change in landscapes where the character is generally weaker and in poorer condition through enhancement, restoration or creation (para 4.3.2)" and the guidelines aim to "ensure that those landscape features and characteristics identified as making a particular contribution to Greater Cambridge's local distinctiveness and sense of place are appropriately protected, managed and enhanced." (para 4.4.2).

2.3.11 The CSET route runs through LCT3 - Lowland Farmlands (LCA3D Cam and Granta Tributaries Lowland Farmlands) and LCT9 – River Valleys (Landscape character area LCA9DGranta River Valley). The key characteristics and sensitivities of the landscape as relevant to the proposal are set out in Appendix 1 of this proof – CSET route LVIA.

2.3.12 The GCLCA proposes strategies for the conservation and enhancement of the landscapes, as set out below. It is noted that emerging Local Plan Policy: Policy GP/LC cites the GCLCA, requiring that local landscape character as set out in the Greater Cambridge Landscape Character Assessment is protected, conserved and enhanced. The GCLCA makes it clear that neither objectives nor guidelines are meant to be prescriptive, but a noted shift is seen in that draft LP policy GP/LC provides for

[9] Greater Cambridge Landscape Character Assessment part A 4.3, 4.4, 4.5 pp32-35

mandatory landscape protections, framed as "must" in policy terms:

> *"1 All new development proposals must: a. Protect, conserve and enhance the local landscape character as set out in the Greater Cambridge Landscape Character Assessment (2021) Part A and Part B or successor documents;[10]"*

2.3.13 **LCT3/LCA3D** contains guidance for landscape management, which includes the following: Conserve and enhance existing watercourses. Conserve and enhance existing hedgerows. Consider opportunities for replanting hedgerows *where these have become lost or fragmented.* Manage the scale, siting and design of settlement expansion to avoid incongruous development in the rural landscape; Maintain the distinctive settlement pattern of the area and its local context; Enhance village gateways and, where appropriate, consider provision of appropriate planting on village approaches; Avoid the use of standardised and intrusive urban materials, street furniture, lighting and signage as part of traffic calming measures wherever appropriate.

2.3.14 **LCT9/LCA9D** contains guidance for landscape management, which includes the following:: Conserve and enhance tranquillity and rural qualities**;** Conserve distinctive sense of rural isolation and separation between villages. Development guidance includes the following: Do not disrupt visual unity along the valleys; Avoid use of standardised and intrusive urban materials.

2.4 Approach

2.4.1 As noted above, I do not consider that transparent assessment of landscape and visual effects can be achieved on the basis of the ES chapter 11. I have made a reassessment of landscape and visual effects using the methodology as set out in chapter 11 of the ES scoping report (CD1-10.11), included at Appendix 1 of this proof. I have used the most recent landscape character assessment (Greater Cambridge Landscape

[10]Greater Cambridge Landscape Character Assessment part A 4.4.2 p33

Character Assessment CD15.03), but with reference to the Green Belt studies in as far as they cover openness, landscape and visual issues. I have used the applicant's viewpoint photographs and photomontages and have carried out site visits.

2.4.2 The CSET and BW4B Alternatives both sit within the Greater Cambridge Green Belt. In making an assessment of the impact of development on openness I have considered the advice contained in the Planning Practice Guidance ('PPG') Paragraph: 013 Reference ID: 64-013-20250225. Guidance explains that the assessment of openness requires a judgement informed by the circumstances of the case. Relevant considerations can include spatial and visual effects, the duration and reversibility of development, and the activity it generates. The PPG expressly recognises that this includes 'the degree of activity likely to be generated, such as traffic generation'. For the purposes of this assessment, it is assumed that the proposed development is permanent.

2.4.3 Greenbelt purpose c is to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. For each section I have made an assessment of the nature of encroachment and its significance.

2.4.4 The Rule 6 party has only limited resources to test the results of the submitted ES, bearing in mind the inconsistencies noted above. As a result, the extent of my LVIA covers the operation period (Y15) and does not include an assessment of areas where there are no differences between the BW4B Alternative and the CSET proposal (principally the A11 travel hub). My LVIA is included at Appendix 1. Section 4 below summarises the results of that assessment.

3.0 Assessment of Landscape and Visual Impacts

3.1 CSET Promoted Route

Section 1 South of Babraham

3.1.1 The route runs through the Granta Chalk Stream Landscape LCT9D on the edge of Babraham approaching the travel hub.

3.1.2 Elements of the proposal that will bring about landscape change are:

- Paved busway and access track;
- A new bridge[11] across the Granta. Deck approx. 5m above existing GL with 1.8m containment parapet and a further 1.2m height mesh barrier.
- Embankment and drainage earthworks. The embankment, at section 14[12], is some 3m above existing ground level.
- Subdivision of existing arable land fields;
- Tree and hedge planting.

3.1.3 The landscape displays good scenic quality, a strong sense of place and is assessed as being of high value. The landscape is not of high national importance, but is of local importance as a recreational route and locally distinctive and rare as part of a network of chalk streams. Characteristics noted above as highly susceptible contribute to a strong sense of place and have a limited ability to accommodate change without substantial harm. Landscape sensitivity is assessed as being medium to high.

3.1.4 New, wholly uncharacteristic features in the form of the fenced CSET route, embankment and bridged section over the Granta would conflict with key characteristics of the intimate, small scale riverine landscape; tranquil, rural quality and sense of time depth. Landscape treatment would not fully address adverse effects. This scale of effect would be noticeable over a localised part of the landscape character

[11] CD1-12.08 structure 8
[12] CD1-11.02 sheet 4

area. Change would be permanent. A moderate adverse magnitude of effect. Overall effect is judged to be moderate adverse.

3.1.5 Change would not meet the management objectives for the LCT: rural and tranquil qualities of the landscape would not be conserved or enhanced. Planting would take place, but would not follow historic hedgerow pattern. There is some scope for restoring wetland habitats.

3.1.6 Development would not meet guidelines for development – it would disrupt visual unity along the valleys and would involve the prominent use of intrusive urban materials for bridging.

3.1.7 **Section 1 Effects on Openness and Greenbelt Purpose c**: Spatially, this section of the route proposes significant engineering works, including embankments and bridging, as well as the paved busway that will result in a noticeable change to the openness of the area, fundamentally changing its character in the area of the bridge crossing. Visually, openness will be noticeably affected by the proposed bridge crossing the river. The route crosses an existing field, where its effect will be to reduce the perception of openness on either side of the development. The development encroaches into an area of open countryside that is otherwise undeveloped.

3.1.8 The effect on visual openness could have been mitigated by routing close to existing landscape features such as field boundaries, or the line of the A11.

3.1.9 Levels of activity in this section of the route will increase but would be experienced in conjunction with existing activity on the busy A11 to the east.

3.1.10 A moderate to major impact on Greenbelt openness is predicted and a moderate conflict with Green Belt purpose c.

Section 2 North and East of Sawston

3.1.11 This section runs from the northern edge of Sawston (west of the football ground) to land to the High Street, Babraham crossing. It covers landscape character type/area LCT3/LCA3D east of the Sawston Road crossing and LCT8/LCA8A Lowland Chalklands.

3.1.12 Elements of the proposal that will bring about change are:

- Creation of parking and bus stop infrastructure, including fencing and lighting, at Sawston Road.
- Crossing with street lighting at High Street.
- Paved busway and access track;
- Subdivision of existing arable land fields;
- Tree and hedge planting.

3.1.13 Landscape value is assessed as low – medium and landscape sensitivity as low.

3.1.14 The development will extend the influence of settlement into the countryside, through to the bus stop infrastructure on the edge of Sawston and the introduction of urban elements into the countryside. The rectilinear field pattern will be disrupted by the proposal, in effect imposing an uncharacteristic pattern on the landscape.

3.1.15 The proposal would not meet the guidance for integrating development into the landscape in that at the village gateway on Sawston Rd (Proposed Plans sheet 11 of 16) the appearance would be a stark one, appearing from VPMs to use standardised and intrusive urban materials. The village gateway from the east would not be enhanced.

3.1.16 The development would not address landscape management guidance in that it would not contribute to managing the agricultural landscape for production and would not conserve the tranquil and uninterrupted rural character. Although hedgerows and trees would be planted, the pattern of new planting would be uncharacteristic of the existing

mostly rectilinear field pattern.

3.1.17 Moderate adverse magnitude of effect is predicted and an overall slight adverse effect.

3.1.18 **Section 2 Effects on Openness and Greenbelt Purpose c**: Spatially, the route sits within a development corridor approximately 14m wide, with a bus stop and infrastructure at the entrance to Sawston village. North of Sawston, the route follows the boundary of the developed edge of the village. This alignment mitigates the effect of the development on the visual aspect of openness and mitigates encroachment of development into the countryside. East of Sawston, the route follows the line of the disused railway before cutting eastwards across the existing fields. The route does not respect existing field boundaries. The selection of route through a flat landscape assists the proposed planting in mitigating effects on openness, but visual and spatial effects on openness will remain. The route encroaches into an area of open countryside between the A505, Sawston and Babraham where there is currently little built development.

3.1.19 East of Sawston, the development will introduce activity into areas of open Green Belt where there are currently only the very low levels of activity associated with arable farming. North of Sawston activity levels will increase but will be experienced in conjunction with already moderate levels of activity connected to the edge of settlement uses.

3.1.20 In this section of the route, there will be discernible changes to Green Belt openness, more noticeable close to Sawston, and a conflict with purpose c. The effects are predicted to be moderate to minor.

Section 3 - East of Stapleford

3.1.21 Most of the route sits within LCT9/LCA9D Granta River Valley. The LCT is assessed as being of strong character and in good condition (CD15-03 p173). Landscape value is assessed as medium to high. There are distinctive landscape elements with a limited ability to accommodate change. Particular characteristics and sensitivities susceptible to change from the CSET development include the intimate, small scale riverine landscape; tranquil, rural quality; sense of separation from surrounding settlements. A medium - high sensitivity to change is assessed.

3.1.22 The proposal includes a new bridge structure over the Granta River (Photomontage VP20). There would be a conspicuous change to existing landscape character through the introduction of uncharacteristic elements that would be perceived in the local area and would be permanent. On balance, the development would not contribute to landscape management objectives and would be at odds with guidance on development contained in the GCLCA. A **moderate adverse** magnitude of change is assessed and an overall **Moderate/large adverse** effect.

3.1.23 **Section 3 Effects on Openness and Greenbelt Purpose c**: Spatially, significant engineering works are proposed on this section of the route, including embankments and bridging, as well as the paved busway. Visually, openness will be noticeably affected by the proposed bridge crossing the landscape and embankments, cutting off views along the river. Existing field patterns and hedgerows respect the topography of the landscape in this section. The proposed route cuts across these existing boundaries. The visual and spatial effect of the proposal is exacerbated by the choice of route – introducing the need for large engineering structures and subdividing existing field patterns. In this area, the route will be perceived as encroaching into existing countryside and cutting across the existing pattern of rural fields and landform. The

effects on openness will be more noticeable than in other areas because the route crosses a well used public footpath (see VP20).

3.1.24 The development will introduce activity into areas of open Green Belt where there are currently only the very low levels of activity associated with agriculture and public rights of way.

3.1.25 In this section of the route, there will be very noticeable changes to Green Belt openness, that will fundamentally change the visual aspect of openness on parts of the public right of way, and a conflict with purpose c. The effects are predicted to be moderate to major.

Section 4 - North of Shelford

3.1.26 The section runs from Granham Road, across Hinton Way to the proposed stop at Haverhill Road. The route is within the farmed Lowland character area (LCA/LCT3D). Elements of the proposal that will bring about change are:

- Creation of parking and bus stop infrastructure, including fencing and lighting, at Hinton Way and Haverhill Road;
- Paved busway and access track;
- Cuttings, embankments and drainage earthworks;
- Subdivision of existing arable land fields;
- Tree and hedge planting.

3.1.27 Landscape value is assessed as low - medium and landscape sensitivity as medium. The green corridor connecting Cambridge to the surrounding countryside is sensitive to the development. There are detractors to the sense of rural tranquillity closer to Cambridge and on the edge of Great Shelford.

3.1.28 The development would detract from the open character of the hillside for much of the route, between Granhams Lane and Haverhill Rd. The development would perceptually

extend the settlement pattern away from the existing settlement edge towards the route where it runs close to existing settlement or at stops, for example on Haverhill Road and north of Hinton Way. In these areas it would erode existing rural character. It would be a noticeable and uncharacteristic new element on the edge of the Magog Down (see VP18). Existing levels of rural tranquillity would be further reduced. The subdivision of existing fields follows a pattern that is uncharacteristic of local field patterns. A moderate adverse overall effect is predicted.

3.1.29 **Section 4 Effects on Openness and Greenbelt Purpose c**: In spatial terms, this section of the route comprises a paved carriageway of approx. 7m width within a development corridor between 14m and 25m wide, along with bus stop infrastructure on Hinton Way and Haverhill Rd. The route includes loss of open countryside for engineered embankments and cuttings to accommodate the busway.

3.1.30 Visually, the route will be perceived as an incursion of development into open countryside. It will be visible from neighbouring residential areas where it will be an uncharacteristic element in otherwise open views. From the road junctions, there would be views along the length of the route. The paved road will be visible without mitigating planting, cutting into open countryside. Small areas of open space between the proposal and existing settlement edges will no longer be perceived as open countryside, but as land between developments, contributing to the visual encroachment of the development into the countryside. Examples are south of the Haverhill Road bus stop, between the retirement village and the route north of Haverhill Road, and the small field parcel south of Hinton Way to the west of the route. Associated earthworks and the elevated nature of the land exacerbate the visual effect on openness and the perception of development encroaching into open countryside.

3.1.31 The development will introduce activity into areas of open Green Belt where there are currently only the very low levels of activity associated with arable farming.

3.1.32 In this section of the route, there will be noticeable changes to Green Belt openness, and a conflict with purpose c. The effects are predicted to be moderate.

Section 5 – Cambridge Biomedical Campus to Stapleford:

3.1.33 The route runs adjacent to Nine Wells nature reserve and rises up the side of Whites Hill and the edge of Magog Down to Granhams Road. Elements of the proposal that will bring about change areas detailed on the proposals drawings, structures drawings and site section drawings include the following:

- Embankments and bridging across Hobsons Conduit, replacing existing footbridge and at grade crossing;
- Paved busway with pedestrian restraint system to one side and high containment barrier along railway ;
- Access tracks to SUDS features;
- Road signage.
- Lighting at Granhams Road:

3.1.34 Landscape value is assessed as medium and landscape condition as good. Some characteristics are susceptible to development (open character and extensive views, the setting of the edge of Magog Down, arable landscape and dense settlement pattern). Others are less so. An overall **medium sensitivity to change** is assessed.

3.1.35 The development would detract from the open character of the hillside for much of the route, between Granhams Lane and Nine Wells..It would be an uncharacteristic new element in the setting of the Gog Magog Hills landscape character area..

3.1.36 There would be a noticeable change to existing landscape character through the introduction of uncharacteristic elements that would be perceived in the local area. On

balance, the development would not contribute to landscape management objectives and would be at odds with guidance on development contained in the GCLCA. A medium adverse magnitude of change is assessed and an overall **moderate adverse** effect.

3.1.37 **Section 5 Effects on Greenbelt Openness and Greenbelt Purpose c**: In spatial terms, this section of the route comprises a paved carriageway of approx. 7m width within a development corridor approx. 14m wide in the section next to the railway line. Visually, it will be perceived as an increase in the area of development next to the railway line and the small areas of open space between the railway and the route will appear to be part of the area of developed land. The development will reduce visual openness north of Granhams Rd by subdividing the field. The influence of development will be noticeable on both sides of the route where it runs through open countryside. The development will encroach on open countryside where it leaves the line of the railway and crosses open fields south of Whites Hill.

3.1.38 Levels of activity in this section of the route will increase but would be experienced in conjunction with existing activity on the railway line.

3.1.39 The effect on visual openness could have been mitigated by routing close to existing landscape features such as field boundaries.

3.1.40 In this section of the route, there will be noticeable changes to Green Belt openness, and a conflict with purpose c. Effects partially mitigated by presence of existing development. The effects are predicted to be moderate to minor.

Summary

3.1.41 Significant adverse landscape effects are predicted for high – medium value landscape

receptors in the Chalk Stream landscape character type. The CSET route travels through this landscape, with embankments and bridges forming obtrusive and uncharacteristic interventions in the landscape. Moderate adverse effects are predicted for much of the rest of the route, with effects on the section south east of Cambridge Biomedical Campus also being considered significant adverse.

3.1.42 The development will cause adverse effects on the openness of the Green Belt. Levels of activity will be increased in areas where there are currently only the very low levels of activity associated with agriculture. Spatially, the 14m minimum width development envelope winds its way through open fields and will reduce the spatial aspects of openness. Visually, the route of the development will be noticeable as it crosses hillsides and intimate stream valleys and will impinge on the openness of those landscapes. These effects will be permanent. Parts of the route will extend the perceived settlement edge well into open countryside, leaving small areas of fields between the busway and existing settlements. Existing field patterns will be disrupted. Overall, the effects on the openness of the countryside and encroachment into the countryside will be significant.

3.1.43 In my judgement, changes to route alignment to avoid field boundaries or remove the need for stream crossings could have partially mitigated the effect of the development on the aspects of openness.

3.2 BW4B Alternative

3.2.1 Both the ES and my own assessment have predicted significant adverse effects for sections of the CSET promoted route. The options assessment technical note (CD12.12 p28) discussed and ruled out an alternative route, even though at that stage it was accepted that a route to the north of the promoted route would have fewer

adverse environmental impacts. The BW4B group have put forward an alternative proposal, detailed in the proof of evidence of Neil Rowe, that connects the A11 travel hub and Cambridge Biomedical Campus using existing carriageway for the most part. The route is detailed in the evidence of Neil Rowe including the detail route sheets.

3.2.2 In order to compare the landscape effects of both routes, I have used the same methodology to assess sensitivity, magnitude and overall change as applied to the CSET promoted route. The detailed assessment is at Appendix 1 of this proof of evidence, as summarised below.

Proposed Route

3.2.3 The proposed route runs from the A11 travel hub, connecting to the A1307 (Babraham Road) south of the Babraham campus and running along the existing carriageway as far as Haverhill Road. From here, it follows the line of the A1307 using the existing road verge to Hinton Way, then cuts across two fields to Cambridge Biomedical Campus. The stretch it cuts across is identified as strategic expansion S/CBC in the draft Greater Cambridge Local Plan.

3.2.4 The route is characterised by a variety of landscapes, including the edge of the lowland chalklands, the Gog Magog Chalk Hills and, closer to Cambridge, the lowland farmland landscape character type. As with the CSET route, the route has been considered in separate sections: Section 1 from the travel hub to Wandlebury, Section 2 Wandlebury to Hinton Way roundabout and section 3 from the Hinton Way roundabout to Cambridge Biomedical Campus.

Section 1: Travel Hub to Wandlebury.

3.2.5 The route runs along existing carriageway, with a slight expansion into the road verge at the Babraham Research Campus roundabout.

3.2.6 Landscape Value is assessed as low -medium. The landscape has some scenic quality, and the open character contributes to a sense of place. Some characteristics are susceptible to development (the strong rural character and arable land use, with rectilinear late enclosure field patterns). The landscape is undesignated and of low-medium value. It has a low-medium ability to accommodate the proposal. Overall low sensitivity.

3.2.7 For most of the route, the busway will follow the existing carriageway, with no direct effect on the receiving landscape. At the Babraham Road junction and BRC roundabout, there will be some minor road widening into existing verges, but with little effect on the surrounding landscape. A negligible magnitude of effect is predicted and an overall neutral effect.

3.2.8 **Effects on openness and Greenbelt Purpose c**: Spatially and visually, the route will have very limited effects on openness and encroachment into open countryside at the Babraham Research Campus roundabout, where it would slightly increase the width of the paved carriageway to accommodate the busway on the existing verge. Elsewhere, it would sit on the existing carriageway and cause no further effect on the spatial or visual aspects of the Green Belt. Activity levels would be slightly elevated but would not be noticeable in the context of the existing road.

3.2.9 In this section of the route, there would be very minor alterations to the characteristics and qualities contributing to Green Belt openness and very minor encroachment on to open countryside. A negligible effect on Green Belt openness and encroachment is predicted.

Section 2: Wandlebury to Hinton Way Roundabout.

3.2.10 The section runs from the Wandlebury Hill/Magog Down A1307 to Hinton Way

roundabout. Elements of the proposal that will bring about landscape change are:

- Creation of a busway on existing carriageway.
- Creation of a busway on road verge/field edge.

3.2.11 The route runs close to a nationally designated Scheduled Ancient Monument. Both Wandlebury Country Park and Magog Down are locally valued with a strong sense of place. The area has locally high scenic quality and recognised viewpoints, contributing to high landscape value. Characteristics related to the ecologically diverse and historically rich landscape, as well as locally prominent chalk hills with distinctive panoramic views over Cambridge have a high susceptibility to change from the proposals. Other characteristics and landscape elements are judged to be moderately or of low susceptibility to change. Distinctive characteristics within the landscape are of national importance and of high value. Characteristics such as land cover, low levels of development and recreational facilities have a low susceptibility to change, whereas for others (prominent hilltops and historic features) susceptibility is higher. Overall there is a moderate susceptibility to change from the proposals. Landscape sensitivity is assessed as **medium – high.**

3.2.12 The route uses the existing carriageway through the most sensitive areas of the LCA (between Wandlebury Country Park and Magog Down). There will be no direct effect on landscape elements on this section of the route. The carriageway will not be widened, and the existing woodland will not be affected.

3.2.13 On the stretch between the Haverhill Road and Hinton Way junctions, the busway will run on the existing road verge. There will be an increase in the extent of paved roadway as a result and the influence of transport infrastructure on the landscape will be very slightly increased. Transport infrastructure will be slightly more apparent in views from

the road as it crosses Magog Down and in views towards the Chalk Hills.

3.2.14 Adverse effects have been mitigated by using the existing carriageway where possible and in aligning widened carriageway along the line of the existing transport infrastructure. Further mitigation is possible through hedgerow planting along the southern edge of the new busway, contributing to the landscape management guidance for replanting hedgerows. A minor adverse magnitude of effect is predicted. Combined with medium to high sensitivity, the overall effect would be slight adverse and not significant.

3.2.15 **Effects on openness and Greenbelt Purpose c**: Spatially and visually, the route will have very limited effects between Hinton Way and Haverhill Rd junctions. It would slightly increase the width of the paved carriageway to accommodate the busway on the existing verge, very slightly encroaching into open countryside. Elsewhere, it would sit on the existing carriageway and cause no further effect on the spatial or visual aspects of the green Belt. Activity levels would be slightly elevated but would not be noticeable in the context of the existing road.

3.2.16 In this section of the route, there would be very minor alterations to the characteristics and qualities contributing to Green Belt openness and very minor encroachment on to open countryside. A negligible effect on Green Belt openness and encroachment is predicted.

Section 3: Hinton Way to Cambridge Biomedical Campus

3.2.17 The section runs from the Hinton Way roundabout, across Granhams Road to the Cambridge Biomedical Campus.

3.2.18 Elements of the proposal that will bring about landscape change are:

- Creation of a paved busway on existing agricultural land.
- Removal of existing hedgerows.

3.2.19 The landscape is not designated and has few distinctive features. Its scenic quality comes from its role in the setting of the Gog Magog Hills and as a green setting for Cambridge. The influence of Cambridge Biomedical Campus hospital buildings and the busy A1307 detract from tranquillity. The landscape has a **low-medium value.** Landscape sensitivity is assessed as **medium – low.** Key sensitivities of the landscape, as identified in the GCLCA, are not well represented in the local area and are not relevant to the proposal. Characteristics highly susceptible to change from the proposals are the open character and open views, arable character of the landscape and the contribution of the landscape to the setting of Cambridge and the Chalk Hills.

3.2.20 The route leaves the line of the A1307 at the Hinton Way roundabout. Its development will involve removal of hedgerow at Hinton Way and at the Granhams Road crossings. The route crosses existing farmland towards Cambridge Biomedical Campus and will introduce a noticeable new feature into the landscape. The route would disrupt the existing field pattern.

3.2.21 The development would result in noticeable damage to existing landscape characteristics and elements. It would not fundamentally change the overall character of the receiving landscape. Change would be noticeable locally and would be permanent. A moderate adverse magnitude of effect is predicted and an overall slight to moderate adverse effect.

3.2.22 It is noted that the open field directly west of Granhams Rd is a draft allocation in the local plan for expansion of the Cambridge Biomedical Campus (CBC - policy S/CBC). Land between Hinton Way roundabout and the CBC expansion is allocated as a

strategic enhancement area (S/SEA/CBC). Should these developments go ahead, they would in themselves contribute to changes to the existing character of the landscape. The Strategic Enhancement Area appears to be large enough to allow for landscape mitigation and for the biodiversity net gain requirements of the proposals to be achieved.

3.2.23 **Effects on Openness and Greenbelt Purpose c**: Spatially, the development would sit within a development corridor similar to that proposed for the CSET route, some 14m wide. Visually, the route will be perceived as an encroachment of development into open countryside. It will be seen as an uncharacteristic element in otherwise open views. From the road junctions, it will be visible without mitigating planting, cutting into open countryside. The route will cut through existing open fields, subdividing them and, in the case of the field south of Granhams Rd, extending the influence of the existing transport corridor.

3.2.24 The development will introduce activity into areas of open Green Belt where there is currently a low level of activity associated with arable farming, albeit influenced by the A1307 corridor and Cambridge Biomedical Campus to the north.

3.2.25 The route follows the indicative line of the spur road indicated in the emerging local plan policy S/CBC. If the CBC expansion were not to go ahead, then it would be possible to further mitigate effects by aligning the route more closely with the line of the A1307.

3.2.26 In this section of the route, there would be a noticeable change to the characteristics and qualities contributing to Green Belt openness and a very noticeable encroachment on to open countryside. A moderate effect on Green Belt openness is predicted and a moderate encroachment into countryside.

3.2.27 Should the proposed route be part of the CBC expansion plans, the proposal would result in only moderate to minor additional effects on Green belt openness and conflict with purpose c, in the area between Hinton Way roundabout and the proposed realigned Granhams Rd.

4.0 Conclusions - Comparison of Both Routes

4.1.1 The landscape effects of both routes are summarised below:

CSET Promoted Route

Route Section	Landscape value	Landscape Sensitivity	Magnitude of Effect	Overall Effect
Section 1 South of Babraham Sheets 13-14	Medium - High	Medium - High	Moderate Adverse	Moderate Adverse - Significant
Section 2 – North and East of Sawston Sheets 9 – 12	Low - Medium	Low	Moderate Adverse	Slight Adverse – Not Significant
Section 3 – East of Stapleford Sheets 8 - 9	Medium – High	Medium - High	Moderate Adverse	Moderate to High Adverse - Significant
Section 4 – North of Stapleford Sheets 3 - 7	Low - Medium	Medium	Moderate Adverse	Moderate Adverse – Not Significant
Section 5 – South of Cambridge Biomedical Campus to Great Shelford Sheets 2 - 3	Medium	Medium	Moderate Adverse	Moderate Adverse - Significant

BW4B Alternative

Route Section	Landscape value	Landscape Sensitivity	Magnitude of Effect	Overall Effect
Travel Hub to Wandlebury	Low – Medium	Low	Negligible	Neutral
Wandlebury to Hinton Way Roundabout	High	Medium - High	Minor Adverse	Slight Adverse – Not Significant
Hinton Way to Cambridge Biomedical Campus	Low - Medium	Medium - Low	Moderate Adverse	Slight - Moderate Adverse – Not Significant

4.1.2 There is a diversity of landscape character between the proposed travel hub at

Babraham and the edge of Cambridge. The landscape includes well settled, lowland farmland, intimate chalk streams and the openness of the Gog Magog Hills. The landscape effects of the promoted and alternative routes are very dependent on the character of the receiving landscape and on the degree of intrusion that is required for the busway to be accommodated in the landscape.

4.1.3 Both routes have a common travel hub at the A11, the effects for both routes will be the same in that regard.

4.1.4 For both routes, there are distinct areas with differing characteristics and sensitivities along the route. Two of these landscapes are judged to be of Medium – High and High value.

4.1.5 The Granta Chalk Streams landscape is characterised by a small scale landscape, tranquillity, strong time depth and separation between settlements. The CSET route travels through this landscape, with embankments and bridges forming obtrusive and uncharacteristic interventions in the landscape. The developments cause significant, adverse landscape effects.

4.1.6 The other high value landscape is the Gog Magog Chalk Hills, characterised by a strong sense of time depth, ecological and historical diversity and distinctive panoramic views. The BW4B Alternative runs through the centre of this high value landscape. The design and layout of the route, using the existing carriageway where possible and following the line of the busy A1307 in the road verge where not, have minimised adverse landscape effects. Only slight adverse effects are predicted.

4.1.7 The design of the CSET route includes elements that contribute to adverse effects on the landscape. These include:

4.1.8 Embankments and bridges at river crossings and across undulating land. The BW4B Alternative avoids the need for these intrusive structures by following the existing carriageway on the hilly sections of the route and diverting across open fields only where the topography is relatively flat and even.

4.1.9 Road crossings: New junctions, street lighting and traffic lights on the CSET route contribute an urban character to crossings of otherwise rural roads at High Street, Hinton Way, Haverhill Rd and Granhams Road. The BW4B Alternative crosses Haverhill Road at the existing junction on an already busy road with only minor infrastructure changes. A new spur to the existing roundabout at Hinton Way will result in little change to the already fairly urban character of the junction. The Granhams Road junction will be uncharacteristic – but the road is due to be realigned as part of the redevelopment of the CBC campus which will have a far greater effect on its character.

4.1.10 Uncharacteristic subdivision of fields: Both routes will cross existing arable and pasture fields. The effect is to introduce or increase the influence of transport infrastructure on the openness and character of the rural landscape. The effect is exacerbated where routes do not respect existing field boundaries or echo existing mostly linear field patterns. The CSET route has a far greater effect on field subdivision than the BW4B Alternative. The route fails to respect existing field boundaries or field patterns between the railway line and Granhams Rd in section 5, between Granhams Rd and Hinton Way in section 4, between the Haverhill Rd stop and the line of the dismantled railway east of Stapleford (section 3), either side of High Street in section 2 and across the Granta Valley in section 1. The overall effect is to introduce a new and uncharacteristic pattern over the existing pattern of field boundaries in the local landscape.

4.1.11 By comparison, the BW4B Alternative follows existing road lines between the travel hub

and the Hinton Way roundabout. The section that crosses two existing fields will disrupt the existing field patterns. It is noted that this part of the route crosses areas identified in the emerging local plan for the extension of the CBC[13] and as strategic enhancement areas, which would also bring about change to the existing landscape character.

4.1.12 In conclusion, a major transport infrastructure development such as the busway will inevitably lead to adverse landscape and visual effects. In my judgement, the promoted CSET route will result in greater adverse effects, some of which are significant, over a wider area than the BW4B Alternative.

4.2 Conclusion – Effect on Green Belt Openness and Greenbelt Purpose c

4.2.1 The effects on Green belt openness and scale of conflict with Green Belt purpose c are summarised below.

CSET Promoted Route

Route Section	Adverse effects on Greenbelt openness	Conflict with Green Belt purpose c
Section 1 South of Babraham Sheets 13-14	Moderate to Major	Moderate
Section 2 – North and East of Sawston Sheets 9 – 12	Moderate to Minor	Moderate to Minor
Section 3 – East of Stapleford Sheets 8 - 9	Moderate to Major	Moderate to Major
Section 4 – North of Stapleford Sheets 3 - 7	Moderate	Moderate
Section 5 – South of Cambridge Biomedical Campus to Great Shelford Sheets 2 - 3	Moderate to Minor	Moderate to Minor

BW4B Alternative

Route Section	Adverse effects on Greenbelt openness	Conflict with Green Belt purpose c
Section 1 Travel Hub to Wandlebury	Negligible	Negligible
Section 2Wandlebury to Hinton Way Roundabout	Negligible	Negligible

[13] Policies S/CBC and S/CBC/SEA

Route Section	Adverse effects on Greenbelt openness	Conflict with Green Belt purpose c
Section 3 Hinton Way to Cambridge Biomedical Campus	Moderate	Moderate
CBC extension – additional effects of BW4B proposal in section 3	Moderate to minor	Moderate to minor

4.2.2 Both routes cross the Greater Cambridge Green belt. The CSET promoted route will cause harm to the openness of the Green Belt and will contribute to encroachment of development into open countryside. Levels of activity will be increased in areas where there are currently only the very low levels associated with agriculture. Spatially, the 14m minimum width development envelope winds its way through open fields and will reduce the spatial aspects of openness. Visually, the route of the development will be noticeable as it crosses hillsides and intimate stream valleys and will impinge on the openness of those landscapes. These effects will be permanent. Relatively minor changes to route alignment to avoid field boundaries or remove the need for stream crossings could have partially mitigated the effect of the development on the aspects of openness. In my judgement, the proposal has not mitigated effects on Green Belt openness as far as is practically possible. The development would significantly affect the openness of the countryside and would significantly conflict with Green Belt purpose c, in that it would not safeguard the countryside from encroachment.

4.2.3 By comparison, the BW4B Alternative follows the existing carriageway along most of its route, with only negligible effects on Green Belt openness or encroachment into the countryside as a result. It is only in the last section of the route, from Hinton Way Roundabout, that the route crosses open fields. There are effects on Green Belt openness here, but these can be considered in the light of proposals for the development of this area as a strategic extension to Cambridge.

4.2.4 The CSET promoted route will cause significant adverse landscape effects on the local landscape, some areas of which are judged to be of high value. The proposals will also cause significant harm to the openness of the Green Belt and will result in significant encroachment into the countryside. The selection of route and the nature of the works involved contribute to both landscape and Green Belt adverse effects. In my judgement, these effects could have been partially mitigated, or minimised (but have not been) through changes to the existing route alignment and design. By comparison, the alternative route promoted by BW4B will lead to less severe adverse landscape effects. When considered alongside strategic extension plans for Cambridge, the BW4B Alternative would barely encroach into open countryside and would result in only negligible effects on the openness of the Green Belt.