

From: [REDACTED]
To: [TRANSPORTINFRASTRUCTURE](#)
Subject: Objection to TWAO for Cambourne to Cambridge busway
Date: 08 January 2025 23:25:28

Dear Secretary of State for Transport,

I'm writing to object in the strongest terms to the Greater Cambridge Partnership's (GCP) Cambourne to Cambridge busway proposal, and I hope that you will recognise this proposal as being fatally flawed and as such, refuse to grant the TWAO.

My objection is quite simple: there is already a road on which existing bus services do and can run; the road even has sections of existing bus lanes which help the buses to make better progress at times of high traffic volumes. The problems which this proposed Busway is trying to solve can all be solved without the need for this hugely expensive and destructive construction project: the transport authority simply needs to make sure that bus services are more frequent and better marketed, with simple, easy to understand fare structures. Such measures would increase ridership, thus reducing congestion and in turn helping the bus services to run more reliably: a Virtuous Circle.

I am a resident of South Cambridgeshire, and although I do own a car, I try to use it as little as possible; consequently I've become well used to the vagaries of our local public transport (as well as the good and bad parts of our cycling infrastructure). Cambourne is one of the places that I have been to on the bus a fair few times. When the bus does get held up, it is not the journey along the Madingley Road that is the problem; rather, it is the bus wending its way through central Cambridge that holds it up. This busway will do absolutely nothing to address that problem of central Cambridge traffic, in fact it will put the bus in a narrow back road (Grange Road) from where its journey onward to the centre will if anything be even harder and more tortuous than it is at present for the existing services using Madingley Road.

I've spoken to long-time residents of Cambourne, and they tell me that this busway will not address their transport needs: for instance a lot of them want to be able to get to locations on the North side of Cambridge, such as the A10 Science Park, or the Cambridge Regional College, so they are not going to choose the bus because it would involve a change in central Cambridge and a second fairly long bus journey - they will continue to choose their cars. An obvious way to address this need would be to commission a bus service that simply runs from Cambourne along the existing A428 and A14, to go directly to those locations on the North side of Cambridge. Similar direct services from Cambourne could also serve Cambridge Biomedical Campus by making use of the M11 to Trumpington, and then ideally the existing dedicated Busway from there to CBC. I do not understand why the GCP is obsessed with building Busways, which are massively expensive both in money terms and in embedded carbon cost of construction; this fixation on Busways is irrational, and can only be explained by other vested interests. Sure, the existing St Ives and Trumpington Busways which were finally completed in 2011/12 have proved to be fairly successful, but they were making use of existing old railway lines, so the damage to existing countryside was very minimal. And arguably those lines would have been much more successful now at moving large numbers of passengers around had they actually been re-opened as rail or light rail. Reliability is still an issue, and again it is because once off the Busway, the buses get snarled up in normal Cambridge traffic.

We do not need or want any brand new Busways, all we want is more frequent buses, on more routes, for more hours of the day, and with the cheapest all-day fares covering a wider zone around the city.

No doubt the GCP will have argued that they cannot possibly deliver the so-called "high quality public transport" that the city requires by only using the existing roads. But they have not even tried! Ten years of your special City Deal funding and pretty much all they have done with it is to pay vast amounts of money to an endless stream of consultant firms to draw up plans for over-priced and unnecessary proposed new infrastructure. They could have been employing bus drivers and people to market bus services, instead of employing consultants and other high-paid professional services. They could have engaged consultants to review the genuine problems that existing passengers encounter - such as poor bus stop infrastructure, unclear ticket options, lack of safe and comfortable waiting facilities if changing between different services, lack of clarity about routes and timetables - and addressed these directly on the ground. But they continue to believe that fanciful new busways are the only solution to our transport woes. Or maybe they don't actually believe it, but either because of their Sunk Cost Fallacy, or because of vested interests who hope to gain lucrative construction contracts, one way or another they are hoping to persuade you as Secretary of State for Transport that it's the only solution. It is not!

My plea to you is that you refuse this TWAO, and furthermore tell the GCP that they must find ways to reduce traffic congestion urgently by first disincentivizing car use in the city, then growing the bus network and services on existing roads. The GCP cannot justify the environmental impact and carbon cost of this construction project until they have genuinely exhausted all other options. I think they should be looking

seriously at the 2018 proposal from Smarter Cambridge Transport for re-thinking how buses use the historic city centre: please have a look yourself and imagine how well this could improve both our city centre, and our bus services: <https://www.smartertransport.uk/cambridge-city-bus-hub/>

Regarding disincentivizing car use in general, I would also urge you as Transport Secretary to give serious thought to restructuring vehicle taxes to be in proportion to vehicle weight and miles driven: a very simple way to do this using published vehicle weights and annual mileage as recorded at MOT has been proposed and was discussed just yesterday on BBC radio* - this would be far simpler than using technology as proposed by the House of Commons nearly three years ago** in a report which your predecessor ignored for a year before shamefully dismissing. I really hope that you will be the Secretary of State for Transport who does finally start that honest conversation about road pricing which is so desperately needed. I live in hope.

Thank you for reading, and I look forward to hearing what you decide to do about this TWAO application.

With best regards,

Miranda Fyfe

[REDACTED]

- a Green Party Member, and stood for Parliament here in the July 2024 election.

* <https://www.emissionsanalytics.com/news/2025/1/7/nick-molden-on-bbc-breakfast-critical-mass-in-the-spotlight>

** <https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/153/transport-committee/news/160791/road-pricing-act-now-to-avoid-35-billion-fiscal-black-hole-urge-mps>

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