

[REDACTED]

From: Colin Greenhalgh <[REDACTED]>
Sent: 19 February 2025 14:27
To: TRANSPORTINFRASTRUCTURE
Subject: Objection to Transport and Work Act Order to the Department of Transport (DfT) for a New Busway to the Southeast of Cambridge

I, Colin Ayton Greenhalgh CBE of [REDACTED], am writing to make a formal objection to the Application for a Transport and Work Act Order to the Department for Transport (DfT) for a new Busway to the Southeast of Cambridge, as submitted by the Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) on 9 January 2025.

The grounds for my objection as follows:

- 1) The construction of a new 5 miles in length concrete busway 14 metres wide requiring brutal looking concrete bridges and destroying historically and economically important Green Belt countryside is unnecessary to deliver the required improvements in public transport that this construction proposed by Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) seeks to address. Similar public transport and economic benefits can be secured by building a version of the scheme that was first proposed by the GCP itself in 2018 ! This alternative scheme would involve building sections of bus lane adjacent to the A1307, including no more than one mile of new road, and would avoid the need to create the brutal concrete bridges over the attractively sited River Grantas Chalk Stream and also running the historic Hobson's Conduit Chalk Stream into a culvert.
- 2) The alternative scheme referred to in (1) above will avoid the creation of a permanent and hugely disfiguring scar in the historic Gog Magog Hills landscape, an attractive lung of South Cambridgeshire that provides much used opportunities for rejuvenating and health creating walking/running by many thousands of people of all ages.
- 3) The GCP proposal will result in buses running every four minutes through a recently created countryside park, to the huge detriment of the future users of this park and of the associated flora, fauna and wildlife whose habitat will be in the park.
- 4) The scheme proposed by GCP will also divide and reduce the yield from prime agricultural land and potentially pave the way to future urban-type development and therefore even greater harm to this rich and highly productive country landscape that has long produced high quality grain and other food, thus making a major food and economic contribution to the UK's food self sufficiency.
- 5) The route proposed by GCP will require railway-type crossings to be created in the already busy Haverhill Road, Stapleford, and Hinton Way, Great Shelford, resulting in

further congestion and increased pollution from idling vehicles in areas of these villages where there is significant and long established residential accommodation. No meaningful public study has been undertaken of the potentially serious threat to health resulting from these developments proposed by GCP.

6) At a time of serious constraint in the funds available for public expenditure, the GCP's economic case for its proposed scheme is seriously flawed in a number of respects:

a) The 'real life' business case for the GCP's proposed scheme is weak. Understandably, the Prime Minister, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Cabinet Minister/Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster have all insisted that capital public spending projects should offer good value for scarce public money. The GCP's proposed scheme falls short of meeting this crucial criterion.

b) The total cost of the GCP proposal, originally £130 millions, is now approaching £200 millions and as is often the case with such projects, has been recently revised upwards. Meanwhile, the alternative scheme referred to in (1) above will cost no more than approximately half the sum of the GCP proposal.

c) The alternative scheme referred to in (1) above will better serve the planned expansion of the Cambridge Biomedical Campus.

d) GCP has argued that one advantage of the chosen route is that it will serve the villages of Stapleford, Great Shelford and Sawston and presumably such an advantage has been factored into its financial calculations. However, the location of bus stops on the edge of these large villages and the fact that some walking routes to these bus stops are uphill will create a significant deterrent to potential users. Greater investment in the existing bus routes already serving these villages, with the vast majority of present bus services terminating in the centre of Cambridge, and greater priority for ensuring the smooth running of such services will be a more cost effective solution.

e) Many existing roads and footpaths in South Cambridgeshire are in a dangerous state of disrepair in spite of the high levels of Vehicle, Insurance and Council Tax levied on local residents. Many residents would prefer to see their taxes spent on the proper maintenance of existing roads and footpaths rather than on the GCP's Busway scheme of unproven value.

f) The GCP proposed route terminates at the Cambridge Biomedical Campus. Yet the ultimate destination for many travellers is the centre of Cambridge. Such travellers will have to transfer at the Biomedical Campus from the Busway proposed by GCP to existing services that already terminate in the centre of Cambridge, thus significantly increasing travel times and acting as a deterrent to the abandonment of the use of private vehicles.

7) One might reasonably ask how and why such an ill conceived scheme that will make such poor use of scarce public resources and do huge environmental damage has progressed so far at a preliminary planning cost of several millions of pounds. The truth is that no meaningful consultation with local communities has taken place and the attempts by well informed members of the public to contribute to serious debate at public meetings of the Greater Cambridge Partnership in search of the best and most cost effective scheme have been disregarded by GCP Officers and consultants who seem obsessed with progressing their preferred scheme without regard for either cost or logic.

8) It is also worth noting that in spite of widespread public concern about this GCP proposal and another GCP proposal that envisages equally damaging results West Of Cambridge, neither the local Mayor, nor Cambridgeshire County and South Cambridgeshire District Councils have exercised their legitimate powers of local democracy in order to give serious scrutiny to the GCP proposals. As a result, there is increasing concern in South Cambridgeshire about the declining health of our local democracy and the lack of effectiveness and value for money of the Mayor and local councils, thus prompting an increased desire for reform of local government structure and the abolition of the unelected and unrepresentative GCP.

9) Many local residents have expressed the view that a Judicial Review should be initiated in order to examine why the processes used by GCP at public expense to develop their Busways schemes are so flawed and extravagant. However, the cost of such a Review that would need to be funded primarily by voluntary contributions is prohibitive, another factor resulting in a decline in public confidence in local democracy. This formal objection to the issuing of a Transport and Work Act Order by the Department for Transport offers the only realistic opportunity for local residents to challenge the GCP's proposed scheme in a serious way that the GCP's own processes and the processes of local democracy have failed to challenge.

10) At a time when many local residents are struggling to make ends meet, not least because of the ever upward inflation of Council Taxes that should be funding effective local government, if a Transport and Work Act Order is issued by the Department for Transport approving the GCP scheme and resulting in the allocation by Central Government of an extravagant sum of public money to fund the GCP's seriously flawed proposal, such a decision will not be well received by many residents in South Cambridgeshire.

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