SOUTH NEWNHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM

From: South Newnham Neighbourhood Forum
southnewnhamforum@gmail.com

4th January 2025.

Dear Department for Transport,

The South Newnham Neighbourhood Forum was designated in March 2017, and re-designated in 2022, to draft a Neighbourhood Plan for South Newnham, which is defined as the area south of Barton Road and the roads off it on the north side, including those with pedestrian access, but excluding Grange Road. The Forum is a Statutory Consultee on planning matters for this area and is guided by the National Planning Policy framework and policies in the Cambridge Local Plan 2018 and, where relevant, the Newnham Croft and West Cambridge Conservation Area Appraisals and, where relevant, Supplementary Planning Documents.

I, Roger Sewell of 19, Champneys Walk, Cambridge, CB3 9AW, and here representing the South Newnham Neighbourhood Forum, 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 linking Cambourne to Cambridge", as submitted by the Cambridge Greater Partnership on 12 November 2024. The grounds for the Forum's objection are the following:

1. The world has changed substantially since the Covid Pandemic, and with that, the traffic flows in and around Cambridge. Using pre-Covid traffic data to evaluate the C2C Busway, as is the case, is therefore likely to be fundamentally flawed and new data should be used to assess the Busway and make the investment decision.

2. Between the villages of Madingley and Coton, the current route of the C2C Busway would irretrievably damage the landscape of Madingley Hill and extend the adverse impact of Cambridge City into the surrounding villages, something the Forum does not support.

3. The C2C Busway route is scheduled to run through Coton Orchard Wildlife Site. Such a route will inevitably have a long term adverse effect on local biodiversity and wildlife. When faced with climate change and declining biodiversity, development projects that negatively affect biodiversity should be reconsidered and less environmentally damaging options explored.

4. When entering central Cambridge, the C2C Busway would join Grange Road and use the city's roads which are subject to congestion and traffic delays. As a consequence, the Busway would be subject to the same delays that the current bus services experience and, despite the investment, would not result in a material improvement in quality of service.

5. We would like to see creative alternative options explored which do not suffer the problems detailed above. One such could be a new public transport route with bus lanes and public transport provision beside the A1303. This alternative has not been properly considered, and we believe that it should be, and very possibly at a lower overall project cost.

6. As others have noted, now that the East/West Rail project is being developed, there is no longer a requirement for the C2C Busway, which is an inappropriate use of public money. If East/West Rail existed already, the GCP would hardly be proposing to build a busway from Cambourne to the edge of Cambridge that would cost (at least) £200m and destroy important wildlife habitats and landscape. The Forum joins with others to ask that the proposal be withdrawn and/or for the DfT to refuse it.

7. The modelling submitted does not show adequate evidence to support the claim that the proposed busway causes no increased flood risk to those living adjacent to Bin Brook and upstream of the proposed busway crossing of Bin Brook, and thus could be in contravention of Paragraph 170 of the National Planning Policy Framework. In particular properties on the Gough Way estate adjacent to Bin Brook, as well as 114 Barton Road and its neighbours either side on Barton Road, which have already been flooded by Bin Brook in the past, may be put at increased risk.

We sincerely hope that you will refuse the Transport and Work Act Order, and instead recommend a Public Inquiry to properly scrutinise this poor proposal.

On behalf of the Committee,
South Newnham Neighbourhood Forum.