

Objection to Transport and Work Act Order to the Department for Transport for a new busway linking Cambourne to Cambridge as submitted by Cambridgeshire County Council on 12 November 2024

I, Carolyn Postgate of [REDACTED] am writing to make a formal objection to the above Order.

Whilst I fully support improved local public transport and am a frequent user myself, I do not believe that the scheme currently proposed by the Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) will provide the necessary transport benefits for the increased population growth forecast in and around the City of Cambridge.

My objection in particular is to the section of the route from Madingley Mulch roundabout to Grange Road in Cambridge.

There is a viable alternative for this section of the route: an on-road inbound bus lane on the A1303 as proposed by Cambridge Past, Present and Future, which has never been fully assessed by the GCP. The bus lane would be entirely contained within the existing carriageway of the A1303 and would, contrary to statements made by the GCP, not impinge in any way on the SSSI Madingley Wood, nor the American Military Cemetery.

Listed below are some aspects of the proposed scheme which are problematic:

1. Excessive cost:

At present the cost of the GCP scheme is estimated at £192m, which includes the construction of an expensive new bridge over the M11 motorway. This figure will without doubt rise in line with inflation before completion.

- The on-road bus lane alternative would cost a fraction of this amount and could be completed in a much shorter time span.

2. Extremely low Benefit to Cost Ratio:

The GCP's own assessment of the BCR is between 0.43 and 0.48, well below the acceptable level for public transport schemes and very poor value for money.

- The on-road bus lane BCR would be much higher.

3. Absence of connectivity:

One of the major reasons for designing this busway is to provide commuters from Cambourne and Bourn fast public transport to employment and student destinations in Cambridge. The scheme as proposed cannot provide rapid onward connections to the major employment sites of the Science Park and the Biomedical Campus, and students attending sixth form colleges will need to change buses in the centre of the city to reach their destinations.

- The on-road bus lane would provide connectivity with the Science Park (via the A428/A14) and the Biomedical Campus and sixth form colleges (via the M11), as well as a more direct route into the centre of Cambridge.

4. Speed and reliability:

The scheme as proposed indicates improvements in journey times and reliability because it is "off-road" and therefore not subject to traffic jams in rush hour. This time saving is negated by slow onward journeys through the congested streets of Cambridge.

- The on-road bus lane also avoids congestion and would provide similar journey times.

5. Detrimental effect on Coton village:

The proposed scheme would include a traffic-light-controlled crossing of Cambridge Road, which is the main route into and out of the village. This road (Cambridge Road, High Street to Brook Lane) is often congested when there are traffic problems on the M11 or A14, a situation which would be exacerbated by frequent red lights. This would have the effect of cutting off the main part of the village (High Street, Whitwell Way, Silverdale Avenue, etc) and block access for emergency services.

- The on-road bus lane would avoid this problem entirely.

6. Active Travel:

The proposed scheme offers an "active travel" path next to the busway.

· The GCP-sponsored Comberton to Cambridge Greenway is already planned to bring cyclists through the village of Coton and into Cambridge via the existing footpath over the M11, thus avoiding Madingley Hill. There is no need for an additional path alongside the busway, nor a new bridge across the M11.

7. Environmental damage:

The proposed scheme will cause irreversible environmental damage to the landscape on Madingley Hill, bisecting as it does valuable agricultural land, which is rendered uncultivable through lack of access, and intersecting important vertical drainage ditches which protect the village of Coton from flooding. The damage to Coton Orchard will be irreparable. No amount of promised mitigation, plantations of trees elsewhere, can make up for the loss of over 500 trees and their dependent biodiversity in what is at present a wildlife haven.

· The on-road bus lane would avoid this problem and would cause no damage to the SSSI at Madingley Wood.

Carolyn Postgate

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