Proposed Cambourne to Cambridge Transport and Works Act Order (TWAO)

Royal Mail Group Limited's response to the Secretary of State's request for objections and other representations on or before 8 January 2025

Introduction

Royal Mail and its consultants BNP Paribas Real Estate have reviewed the documents for the above Order as notified by letter to Royal Mail on 12 November 2024.

Royal Mail wishes to submit this consultation response to the Secretary of State in advance of the close of the above deadline.

Royal Mail – relevant information

Under section 35 of the Postal Services Act 2011, Royal Mail has been designated by Ofcom as a provider of the Universal Postal Service. Royal Mail is the only such provider in the United Kingdom. The Act provides that Ofcom's primary regulatory duty is to secure the provision of the Universal Postal Service. Ofcom discharges this duty by imposing regulatory conditions on Royal Mail, requiring it to provide the Universal Postal Service.

Royal Mail is under some of the highest specification performance obligations for quality of service in Europe. Its performance of the Universal Service Provider obligations is in the public interest and this should not be affected detrimentally by any statutorily authorised project.

Royal Mail's postal sorting and delivery operations rely heavily on road communications. Royal Mail's ability to provide efficient mail collection, sorting and delivery to the public is sensitive to changes in the capacity of the highway network.

Royal Mail is a major road user nationally. Disruption to the highway network and traffic delays can have direct consequences on Royal Mail's operations, its ability to meet the Universal Service Obligation and comply with the regulatory regime for postal services thereby presenting a significant risk to Royal Mail's business.

Royal Mail position

Reference the further below plan, Royal Mail has the following four operational properties within approximately 5 km of the proposed Cambourne to Cambridge works:

1. Cambridge Delivery Office and Road Transport Workshop
2. Cambridge Parcel Force Local Depot
3. Cambridge Parking
4. Cambridge (Henley Road) Parking

In exercising its statutory duties every day, Royal Mail vehicles use all of the main roads that may potentially be affected by the proposed Cambourne to Cambridge works.

Any periods of road disruption / closure, night or day, on or to the roads immediately connected to the proposed Cambourne to Cambridge works or the surrounding highway network will have the potential to impact operations and may consequently disrupt Royal Mail's ability to meet its Universal Obligation service delivery targets.

Royal Mail's performance of the Universal Service Provider obligations is in the public interest and should not be affected detrimentally by any statutorily authorised project. Accordingly, Royal Mail seeks to take all reasonable steps to protect its assets and operational interests from any potentially adverse impacts of proposed development.

Royal Mail does not wish to stop or delay the Cambourne to Cambridge busway route scheme from occurring. However, Royal Mail does wish to ensure the protection of its future ability to provide an efficient mail sorting and delivering service to the public from and to the above identified operational facility in accordance with its statutory obligations.

Based on the information that is currently available, the proposed Cambourne to Cambridge works have potential to impact on Royal Mail operations without appropriate mitigation / construction traffic management. There is also potential for cumulative impact in conjunction with activities associated with the construction of other proposed major developments, possibly including East West Rail.

In order to protect Royal Mail's interests, it is requested that wording is added to the Construction Transport Management Plan ("CTMP") for the proposed scheme to secure the following proposed mitigations:

1. the CTMP includes specific requirements that during the construction phase Royal Mail is notified by Cambridge County Council / Greater Cambridgeshire Partnership or their contractors at least one month in advance on any proposed road closures / diversions / alternative access arrangements, hours of working;

2. where road closures / diversions are proposed, Cambridge County Council / Greater Cambridgeshire Partnership or their contractors liaise with Royal Mail at least one month in advance to identify and make available alternative highway routes for operational use, where possible; and

3. the CTMP includes a mechanism that informs Royal Mail about works affecting the local highways network (with particular regard to Royal Mail's distribution facilities near the proposed works, as identified above).

In addition, Royal Mail will require that Cambridge County Council / Greater Cambridgeshire Partnership or their contractors provide a named contact and timetable for the proposed works at least two months before any works commence.

Royal Mail wishes to reserve its position to submit further consultation response/s on the proposed Cambourne to Cambridge TWAO, if necessary.

Any further consultation information on this infrastructure project and any questions of Royal Mail should be sent to:

Holly Trotman (holly.trotman@royalmail.com), Senior Planning Lawyer, Royal Mail Group Limited, 185 Farringdon Road, London EC1A 1AA

Daniel Parry Jones (daniel.parry-jones@realestate.bnpparibas), Director, BNP Paribas Real Estate, Portwall Place, Portwall Lane, Bristol BS1 6NA