

## **Proof of Evidence**

### **To be presented at the Public Inquiry**

#### **With reference to the Transport and Works 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**

Introduction: My name is Mrs Carolyn Postgate. I have been a resident of Coton for 45 years, I am Editor of the village magazine, the Coton Community News, a Parish Councillor and member of the Coton Busway action Group. In the past I have served on the Board of Trustees of Coton Village Hall, and as Clerk to the Governors of Coton Primary School. I mention these, mostly voluntary, posts to show that I have been closely involved with the life of the village for many years.

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 Applicant will provide the necessary transport benefits for the increased population growth forecast to the west of the City of Cambridge. Instead, I support the CPPF/CPC alternative for this section of the route.

In my original letter of Objection and in my Statement of Case I mentioned eight separate objections to the section of the Scheme from Madingley Mulch to Grange Road. Most of these have been or will be dealt with by other objectors. Here I will confine my remarks to the detrimental effect on Coton Village and its residents, serious safety concerns and route conflict with the proposed new Madingley Hill water reservoir.

#### **1. Detrimental effect on Coton village:**

The Applicant's scheme would include a traffic-light-controlled crossing of Cambridge Road<sup>1</sup> **[CD1-125 Sheet 13]** which is the main route (of only two roads) into and out of the village. This road (Cambridge Road, High Street to Brook Lane) is often congested with standing traffic backing up all the way to Brook Lane when there are traffic problems on the M11 or A14, a situation which would be worsened by frequent red lights. This would also have the effect of blocking the exit from the main part of the village (High Street, Whitwell Way, Silverdale Avenue, etc) and blocking access for emergency services.

I refer to **[CD1-20.12 page 19 Figure 6]**

GCP estimates that eight buses per hour each way<sup>2</sup> will use the off-road busway from Cambourne to Cambridge via Coton. This would mean a total of 16 buses every hour crossing Cambridge Road, Coton, with a red

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<sup>1</sup> CD1-125: CtoC-12-DO5-00-Rights of Way, Traffic Regulation, and Highway Plans /CtoC-12-DO5-00.pdf Sheet 13

<sup>2</sup> CD1-20.12: C2C-OBC-2020-Bus-Strategy-Report-Appendix-F.pdf page 19 Figure 6

traffic light stopping vehicles every 3.75 minutes to allow the buses to cross the road. In the morning session of the Inquiry on Friday 19 September, during Mr Lonergan's evidence, I was very much surprised, when asked by Mr Parker how many buses would be expected to use the busway, to hear Mr Lonergan quote the number "10 to 12 buses each way". He gave no document reference for this statement, so I have not been able to check the source of this estimate, but if true, it alters the frequency of red traffic lights on Cambridge Road to every 3 or 2.5 minutes, depending on whether 20 or 24 buses cross the road per hour. This would materially alter the viability of Cambridge Road as a major access road into and out of the village, particularly twice a day during term time when a large number of vehicles transport staff and children to and from Coton Primary School from the surrounding area.

Additionally, the Applicant's TWAO shows that this is where a bus stop would be sited.

I refer once again to **[CD1-125 Sheet 13]** It is not clear from the plan (Sheet 13) exactly where the stop would be but the catastrophic consequences to Coton of increased car traffic dropping off and collecting passengers at this bus stop, or commuters parking along High Street/Cambridge Road in order to catch the bus, have not been considered at all nor has any provision been made for this likely development. A number of drivers from outside the area may choose to park on Cambridge Road, Coton instead of Scotland Farm. Parking restrictions along Cambridge Road to prevent this from happening may not be a viable option as this is the only parking available for several houses along Cambridge Road. To defer all discussion of the potential consequences to the detailed design stage is not an adequate resolution of this problem.

The distance to this bus stop from the further reaches of Coton village have also not been taken into consideration. Houses at the far end of Silverdale Avenue and Pendrick Close are over ½ mile from the proposed bus stop in Cambridge Road. There is a much closer existing stop at the junction of Silverdale Avenue and Whitwell Way which is currently served by the No 8 bus but this service is likely to be discontinued should the proposed busway be built.

The safety implications of locating a busway crossing on Cambridge Road, which is used by many pedestrians walking from the centre of the village to the Blue Diamond Garden Centre, have also not been considered.

Between 2015 and 2021 there have been three deaths and one teenager sustaining life-changing injuries on the St Ives to Cambridge guided

busway. Admittedly, these incidents occurred on a guided busway of a different type from the one proposed by the Applicant.

However, Cambridgeshire County Council was taken to court by the Health and Safety Executive in 2024. In a BBC News report in April 2025 it was reported that sentencing Cambridgeshire County Council at Cambridge Crown Court, Judge Mark Bishop criticised the authority for its “rigid and blinkered response” to the fatalities as well as numerous near misses and accidents. In court, the Council was criticised for its dismissive and defensive handling of concerns that included poor signage, unsafe crossings and poor lighting. Cambridgeshire County Council was fined £6 million for safety breaches related to these incidents.

With reference to the CtoC busway, there is no evidence that I can find that safety concerns have been seriously addressed by either the GCP or Cambridge County Council.

Additionally, the proposed busway cuts across Footpath Number 2 from Whitwell Way next to Coton Primary School up to Madingley Road opposite the American Military Cemetery<sup>3</sup>. This footpath is used by many walkers, children walking to and from Coton Primary School and is an important route linking Coton with Madingley Road. It is not clear from the Applicant’s maps what provision will be made to ensure the safety of pedestrians crossing the bus road at a point on the route when buses are likely to be travelling, to quote Mr Lonergan, “at 50 miles per hour”. If speed restrictions are brought in over this section this would adversely affect the Applicant’s projected journey time savings. Also one needs to bear in mind that anyone crossing the 45 metre-wide busway will need to be pretty nippy to avoid buses if they pass as frequently as every 3.75 to 2.5 minutes.

I have not touched on the adverse effect likely to be suffered by all the residents of Coton during the building work of the off-road busway. Large compounds are planned to be sited, one on Cambridge Road behind the last houses in the street, and one at the M11 end of The Footpath, which is a particularly narrow single-track residential road. Admittedly, this will only be for the duration of the building work but this is likely to take at least two years, particularly with the building of the proposed new bridge over the M11. The passage of large and heavy plant machinery and building materials along the very narrow village roads is likely to cause great disruption.

## **2. New Reservoir on Madingley Hill:**

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<sup>3</sup> Coton Footpaths and Bridleways List.pdf (Footpath 2)

In order to provide enough water for all the planned housing developments in Cambridgeshire, a new Fens Reservoir near Chatteris will be built. A pipeline is planned to cross the A428 to an enlarged reservoir at the top of Madingley Hill which is intended to serve the City of Cambridge.

The existing small reservoir will be expanded southwards, occupying a much larger area and will take up exactly the same plot of land that the GCP have earmarked for the off-road CtoC busway. This is illustrated in the attached map<sup>4</sup>, which is composed of Sheets 9 and 10 of the GCP CtoC plans<sup>5</sup> **[CD1-125 Sheets 9 & 10]** overlaying the map in the consultation document for the Fens Reservoir published in August 2024<sup>6</sup>.

Although the Applicant and Anglian Water/Cambridge Water appear to be consulting each other, and it's possible the problem of the pipeline crossing the route of the proposed busway can be solved, it seems to me that there is no solution to the problem of the enlarged underground reservoir unless the CPPF on-road scheme is adopted and that area avoided altogether.

In conclusion, I would like to say that I have been involved in following the development of this off-road scheme since it was first introduced to the village of Coton in 2015. During the 10 years since then the GCP has put in a huge amount of work preparing mountains of paperwork and plans, has employed a great many experts and has spent a very large amount of money already to overcome the obstacles that their choice of off-road route has thrown up. This is no cogent reason, however, to proceed with a harmful scheme that will not deliver what it promises, when a more sensible, cheaper alternative exists.

*I therefore request that the Inspectors reject the Applicant's proposal.*

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#### **List of Documents referred to in the footnotes**

**[CD1-20.12 page 19 Figure 6]** C2C-OBC-2020-Bus-Strategy-Report-Appendix-F.pdf

**[CD1-125 Sheet 13]** CtoC-12-DO5-00.pdf

**[CD1-125 Sheets 9 & 10]**

Coton Footpaths and Bridleways List.pdf

Madingley service reservoir map with C2C overlay.jpg

Madingley service reservoir map.jpg

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<sup>4</sup> Madingley service reservoir map with C2C overlay.jpg

<sup>5</sup> CD1-125: CtoC-12-DO5-00-Rights of Way, Traffic Regulation, and Highway Plans /CtoC-12-DO5-00.pdf  
Sheets 9 & 10

<sup>6</sup> Madingley service reservoir map.jpg