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Ministry for Housing, Communities & Local Government
23 Stephenson Street
Birmingham B2 4BH

10th March 2025

Attention: Rachael Beard, Senior Planning Officer, Planning Casework Unit

Dear Ms Beard

PCU/S19/E0535/3355531: Acquisition of Land Act 1981; Cambridge to Cambourne Order TWA 1992

The proposal is to purchase land which has been open space for as long as memory serves and to exchange it for land which, according to the Act, must match the public amenity value of the existing land.

The order land

The land to be exchanged (marked dark green on dwg 70086660-OD03-00 dated 25/10/24 "the Drawing") includes a designated footpath which has been registered as such for many years. The area is also a Cambridge City Wildlife Site (described in detail in the City's Register as C5.1 TL421589):

<https://files.cambridge.gov.uk/public/ldf/coredocs/Cambridge%20City%20Wildlife%20Sites%20Register%202005.pdf>.

The land is currently used and enjoyed extensively by pedestrians and cyclists as a route through a small peaceful area from Coton through to the University of Cambridge's West Cambridge site and onwards to Eddington & the City.

The exchange land

This land (marked purple on the Drawing) is currently in private ownership and lies alongside (to the east) of a short stretch of the line (marked blue/lime green on the Drawing) marking the City/District/Parish boundary (the "Boundary").

Currently there is no designated access along the Boundary (and specifically between the Coton Footpath & Madingley Road). It is possible to scramble through the undergrowth along an informal path which the landowner has allowed by crude signage from the Coton footpath to Rectory Farm. There is little evidence of this route being used – and indeed why would it be (other than by residents of Rectory Farm).

The exchange land, without designated access (in and out), would have no amenity value; if designated access were given to it then it would be of little value (and certainly not as much as that of the order land) since would be a path which would go nowhere useful for the public.

My objection

I object to this proposal on the following grounds: the exchanged land

- is not "equally advantageous" to the public;
- cannot provide the same rights and amenities as the order land;
- is inaccessible to the public no matter what new footpaths and rights of way might in future be granted on it since such new routes would link no useful destinations;
- cannot provide the amenity value of a thoroughfare as does the path through the order land, that order land being a designated wildlife site, providing a peaceful amenity route;
- has no equivalent trees & hedgerows (which are scientifically proven to improve air quality, particularly near motorways, by absorbing pollutants and reducing particulate matter).

There has been much concern expressed publicly over the impacts of the proposed off-road route of the C2C busway wildlife and habitats. This proposal is another incremental addition to the same concerns.

Yours faithfully

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By email to pcu@communities.gov.uk and by post