Formal objection to Transport and Work Act Order to the Department for Transport (DfT) for a new busway to the Southeast of Cambridge

I, Mr J Chisholm of [redacted], 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 to the southeast of Cambridge", as submitted by the Greater Cambridge Partnership on 9 January 2025. The grounds for this objection follow:

My strong objection to these proposals is that they further dis-integrate and dis-advantage the wider public transport network, without making economic sense in the short or long term, as well as making yet worse the social exclusion for those without car access. The current proposals do little to help the old, the young, and the poor who are all far less likely to have car access. By providing a huge Park and Ride site it encourages yet more to drive.

An easy to achieve bus link into the Cambridge Biomedical Campus (CBC), together with traffic signals and short stretches of bus lane within the existing highway boundary is the only engineering that is needed to reduce existing bus delays. This has previously been proposed, and should have been built several years ago. That, with a stretch of bus lane, would have much reduced bus delays. It seems ironic that significant delays to normal service buses occur on the approach to existing Park and Ride Sites.
In addition, the main current public transport service here, of No 7 &13 buses is inefficient, due to delays caused by private cars, and currently fails, as would the new busway, to cater for the needs of many potential users, including those at the expanding science/business parks, and schools/colleges.

## Engineering challenges

Building the segregated bus route was only originally suggested to enable some sort of autonomous bus, but it is now clear no such vehicles are likely to penetrate the centre of Cambridge, so much of benefits of any such a system are lost. Building 5+ miles of road over the Green Belt, with compensation land is also a challenge. I leave others to expand on those issues.
This route also requires a huge Park and Ride site at 'Four Wentways' which will encourage yet more driving from Linton, Balsham, Bartlow and surrounding settlements, as well as Haverhill, so creating more delays at the A11/A505/A1301 junction, and elsewhere. That 'induced' private car traffic will create more delays, risking offsetting much of the time advantages of the proposed new busway.

## A dis-integrated public transport system

Firstly, we must not underestimate the beneficial effects of the opening of the Cambridge South station which is highly likely to occur before the decisions on this Transport Works Order are decided. There are numbers of towns, large and small, and villages, within 25 miles, that have railway stations, many of which will be served by trains at 30 mins or more frequencies to and from Cambridge South station. Although there is not a 'Haverhill Line' the existing lines from Harlow, Stevenage, Ely and Bury St Edmunds are all within the catchment of those working or visiting the Biomedical Campus which, employs some 20k people and has thousands of visitors each day. With the new station 'on Campus', many currently 'two car' families are likely to find a 'mode switch' to train, beneficial. Much current congestion is very local to CBC. Continuing drivers, reallocating their routes to minimise journey time should reduce existing delays on the both the A1301 and A1307. As with other recent station and rail re-openings I'd expect the use to far exceed official estimates.

Improving existing bus services: '*You don't need to force people out of cars, only provide good alternatives for those who would use them if they existed'*. That might seem to be a case for CSET, but there are far wider benefits from better buses on existing roads at a far lower cost. '*In a congested area you only need to remove 15% of private cars to reduce delays by 85%*'. This is demonstrated in Cambridge as at the morning peak 'half terms' traffic on the main radials drop by some 15% yet delays almost totally 'disappear'!

That clearly only works if current services are improved.

Feedback loops are clearly important: *For every extra private car on a congested network there is an extra cost to everyone, even bus operators and passengers. BUT 'For every person who switches from car to bus there is a saving for everyone, bus operators, passengers, and even existing drivers!*

The easiest way to improve existing bus services would be for No13 services, to build that short bus link over County land from Babraham Road into the CBC, for which no 'Order' is required. Even more easily, for both Nos 7 &13 is to utilise the existing Guided Bus route from CBC to Cambridge station. The section on Hills Rd from the 'Addenbrooke's Bus station' to the main station, which these routes currently use, is where much of the peak delays for buses occur. Those delays often disrupt often the timetables, far out on the bus network well outside peak times.

Integration of works and school buses into an improved network would enable more a frequent network over a wider area. There are existing well used works buses to Granta Park and the Genome Campus, as well as school and college buses to St Bede's and the Cambridge Regional College amongst others. Replacing existing 'works' buses: The Genome Campus is growing fast both for research space and dwellings, and it should be easy to extend the existing No7 services from a current terminus at Pampisford, the mile or so to the Genome Campus, or just beyond to Great Chesterford station. A frequent No 7 bus, all day, from the Genome Campus through Sawston, Stapleford and on to the Cambridge Biomedical Campus, and on to Cambridge seems an obvious no-brainer, especially if it uses the existing Guided Bus route from the CBC. For the No 13 extra services could serve the Babraham Campus and Granta Park with little extra work, as well as gaining time savings from the existing busway from CBC.

Integrating school and college buses: A more frequent and reliable No7 on the Saffron Walden Corridor would benefit many, but those going to the Cambridge Regional College (CRC) are more challenging, but could give very wide long-term benefits. CRC has some 2,000 students with many courses tailored to those who would otherwise 'Not be in Education, Employment or Training' (NEETs). Some students who greatly benefiting from such courses are 'fragile' so the lack of direct buses means they remain 'NEETs'. If just some of the No7 & No8 buses were to extend to North Cambridge to serve CRC and Science Park, it would serve many and reduce CRC costs of running 'special' buses.
There are currently significant numbers of school/college/works buses. It shows the failure of the existing network that so many are needed. Hospital trips is another group not effectively captured by existing public transport.

A clear dis-benefit of the busway is the proposal to route No 7 services from Sawston via Babraham Road (Sawston) and the busway, so avoiding the main populations in Stapleford and Great Shelford which combined is around 5,000!

## A conclusion

All of the above improvements could be tackled NOW for very little capital expenditure, bringing benefits, *some almost immediately*. The 'Win-Win' of improved public bus service on mainly existing roads, with a wider reach in space and time for the bus network, would capture more otherwise 'car' trips. More dwellings and more jobs could then be supported without more private cars, and so make buses even better. That is clearly 'Win-Win'. An often uncosted benefit is the savings on Education and Health budgets of improved public transport in this area.

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority has a target of reducing car trips by 20%. CSET does little if any to help, as additional Park and Ride sites clearly encourage more car use. A wider, better public transport network on mainly existing roads and busways, would better help that 20% reduction, and in a short timescale.

CSET is not needed.

Mr J Chisholm, [redacted]