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From: [redacted]
Sent: 04 March 2025 15:31
To: TRANSPORTINFRASTRUCTURE
Subject: Objection to Cambridge South East Transport Scheme transport and works at order.

Response to Cambridge South East Transport Scheme Transport and Works Act Order (TWAO) – Draft Order Documents

From: Glynis Huskisson, [redacted] 4th March 2025

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This letter outlines my objection to the proposed guided busway under the Draft Transport and Works Act Order (TWAO) procedure. While recognising the urgent need for improved infrastructure to address congestion on the A1307 Babraham Road and provide sustainable travel solutions, I assert that the proposed busway route is environmentally damaging, economically inefficient, and fails to adequately serve the needs of the community.

Instead, I propose an on-road solution along the A1307 that is cost-effective, less disruptive, and aligns better with local and national planning policies.

1. Overview of the Legal Framework The proposal is governed by the Transport and Works Act 1992 and the Transport and Works (Applications and Objections Procedure) (England and Wales) Rules 2006. Under these frameworks, projects must demonstrate significant public benefit, comply with local and national planning policies, and justify any environmental impacts or encroachments on protected areas such as green belts. I contend that the proposed guided busway fails to meet these standards.

2. Key Objections to the Proposed Route

2.1 Environmental Impact

• Irreversible Damage to Protected Areas: The proposed route through Gog Magog Down and Hobson's Brook valley would result in irreversible environmental degradation to Nine Wells, White Hill, and adjacent areas, which include a Scheduled Monument. These areas are vital ecological and historical assets.

• Conflict with Green Belt Protections: The route primarily traverses green belt land. National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph 152 dictates that development on green belts is permissible only in "very special circumstances", which the current proposal fails to evidence. In Babraham it would be visible to much of the village and would cut across the picturesque road to Sawston, the cyclepath there being used by villagers to walk their dogs and exercise. A generally peaceful area would become noisy and polluted by frequent diesel buses.

2.2 Policy Non-Compliance

• Contradiction with Planning Policy: The proposal conflicts with policies in the current South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018, the emerging Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service Local Plan, the NPPF, and the emerging Stapleford, Babraham and Great Shelford

Neighbourhood Plan. These policies prioritise sustainable development, environmental preservation, and enhancing the unique characters of our rural communities.

• Urbanisation of the Green Belt: The proposal parcels up land along the length of the busway, opening the door to further ad hoc development, threatening erosion of the villages it passes independent rural identities, and effectively subsuming the villages into a further expanded Cambridge.

2.3 Flawed Justification and Decision-Making Process

• Legacy of Cambridge Autonomous Metro (CAM): The route selection was initially tailored to meet the defunct Cambridge Autonomous Metro (CAM) criteria, first proposed in 2017 and scrapped in 2021. This outdated rationale undermines the validity of the current proposal.

• Flawed Consultation Process: The results of a 2016 consultation conducted by the GCP favoured on-road solutions, yet these preferences were disregarded in subsequent development and consultation phases. In a 2018 consultation conducted by the GCP, the division of votes for on-road options misrepresented public opinion, suggesting higher support for the off-road route than actually existed. The structure of this consultation meant that it was impossible to draw substantive conclusions as on-road proposals were split to divide the vote, but in aggregate they exceeded the popularity of the single off-road option by a substantial margin. The Local Liaison Forum (LLF), a key stakeholder group, lacked representation from affected areas.

3. Alternative Proposal: On-Road A1307 Solution I recommend an A1307 route that incorporates on-highway bus lanes and a dedicated spur into the Cambridge Biomedical Campus (CBC). This alternative:

1. Serves Key Destinations: The A1307 route better connects key employment sites, including the Babraham Research Campus, Copley Hill Business Park, and CBC, as well as new housing developments near the Biomedical Campus.

2. Aligns with Proposed Hospital Developments on the CBC: The A1307 route potentially integrates more effectively with the proposed developments on the CBC, unlike the proposed off-road route, which is a significant walk away from the main hospital and not easily accessible for those with limited mobility.

3.1 Cost-Benefit Ratio: Estimated at £100 million less than the guided busway, the on-road solution offers significant financial savings while minimising construction disruptions.

4. Community Concerns

4.1 Local Transport and Accessibility

• Inadequate Local Benefits: The proposed busway stop does not serve the villages it passes since it would be on the outskirts of villages, rendering it less accessible than the existing bus routes, which provide fast and efficient service to the CBC and Cambridge. It might also encourage on-road parking.

• Traffic Disruptions: Granhams Road and Hinton Way, already burdened by level crossings which are closed for c.23 minutes per hour during the day, would face further congestion during and after construction. With the busway closing the road every 5 minutes during peak times it would grid lock the Babraham-Sawston junction just when villagers are trying to get to work or their children to school. The GCP road survey consisted of merely a one hour sample at an

unspecified time which was totally inadequate to assess the impact of the guided busway crossing this busy road near a junction.

4.2 Community Consultation . Babraham villagers and the Parish Council have shown strong resistance to this proposed project as it will damage our village and offer no gains to residents

• Residents also made clear that they were unlikely to use the stop on CSET as there were more appropriate public transport provisions in the village.

4.3 Lost Opportunities for Rail Connectivity

• Impact on Haverhill Rail Reconnection: The guided busway reduces the potential for reinstating a rail link to Haverhill, a critical commuting hub for CBC workers. This short term bus solution is not scalable to meet future transport demands.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations – I, like many in Babraham strongly object to the proposed guided busway. The irreversible environmental damage, non-compliance with planning policies, and inadequate community benefits render the project inappropriate. I urge the adoption of the A1307 on-road solution as a more sustainable, cost-effective, and community-aligned alternative.

Summary of Recommendations

1. Re-evaluate the guided busway proposal in light of its environmental and social impacts.

2. Prioritise the A1307 on-road solution to reduce costs and improve construction efficiency.

3. Reopen consultations with local stakeholders to ensure representative decision-making. By adopting a more community-oriented and environmentally sensitive approach, we can achieve sustainable infrastructure for the future.

Glynis Huskisson

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