

Public Inquiry Notes for 25 September

Introduction

Firstly, thank you for allowing me time to speak at this Public Inquiry. I am representing myself as an individual, a local resident and tax payer with no ties to any organisation.

I would like to stress that I am supportive of a busway from Cambourne to Cambridge and also supportive of the hub and spoke vision which connects Cambridge to surrounding towns and villages by high quality public transport links.

I also need to mention that the busway does not personally impact me, my motivation for participating in the public inquiry is to question the significant public expenditure and provide feedback about the busway consultation process that I participated in.

I have lived in Cambridge for 36 years and in the area close to the planned busway for 20 years. I hope to bring some local knowledge and context to this inquiry and provide some facts and data that may not be known to the inspectors.

In my statement of case, I raised concerns about the possibility of an increased flood risk to the housing estate of Gough Way which is a short distance upstream from the proposed crossing at Bin Brook. Given the in-depth and expert analysis performed by Clare Hall, I cannot add anything additional. However, I would like to see a written guarantee by the GCP that the scheme will not exacerbate the already high flood risk to the estate and for Cambridge County Council to underwrite any financial loss for my neighbours caused by flooding that can be attributed to this scheme in subsequent years.

I became aware of the busway scheme back in 2015 when the better busways leaflet was posted through my door. I believe there has been much change in Cambridge since 2015 and which has eroded the business case for the off-road route scheme. I don't believe the GCP has kept abreast of the changing circumstances over the last ten years leaving their proposal much less relevant now than it was back in 2015.

Change over the last 10 Years

In this Statement of Case I would like to revisit the Options Appraisal Report Part 2 (C2C Better Public Transport Project Appraisal Report (Part 2)) and given where we are today and with local context, illustrate that perhaps the CPPF proposal is now a higher scoring option.

Before I cover some of high-level assessment criteria or 'Themes' in the OAR I would like to explain why the off-road route does not meet the objectives of the scheme, why it doesn't fit with the wider transport plans for this area and I would like to highlight realistic costs, both environmental and financial before applying them to the OAR scoring criteria.

Route Does Not Fulfil Objectives

In the context of transport, there are four major employment sites in Cambridge:

- West Cambridge Site
- Cambridge Science Park (including the Cambridge Business Park)
- Cambridge Biomedical Campus
- Cambridge City Centre

Transit to the Cambridge Science Park is obviously via the A428 and A14 as the Science Park is in the North East corner of Cambridge and the A14 has recently been upgraded to a 3-lane motorway. It would be inconceivable to attempt to route a bus journey from Grange Road to the Science Park during rush hour traffic. Neither the GCP's route and the CPPF' route are constrained from offering additional bus services via the A14.

The proposed off-road route transits through the Coton orchard and then over a new bridge over the M11 with no slip roads to or from the M11 itself. The GCP's off-road route is constrained to only delivering passengers to the West Cambridge Site and then onto Cambridge City Centre.

If passengers were to travel to the Addenbrookes Outpatients from Cambourne via the off-road route, they would get to Grange Road in about 30 minutes but according to the U-Bus U1 and U2 timetables, it would take a further 50 minutes and 48 minutes respectively between 7:44 and 7:56 am during weekdays. For those people that use buses regularly, they know that buses are either on time or late so these estimates are best case scenario.

Off-road route journey time between Cambourne and Addenbrookes Outpatients at the Cambridge Biomedical Campus is 1 hour 18 minutes before 9 am on weekdays (best case scenario).

Currently the quickest way to the Cambridge Biomedical Campus from Cambourne is via the M11, to the Trumpington Park and Ride and then along the guided busway lane to the campus. There have been infrastructure upgrades recently to increase road traffic capacity from the M11. Worth noting, that the GCP plans to address the capacity issue at the Trumpington Road Park and ride with the new Cambridge South West Travel Hub which is nearby.

The CPPF route offers a marginally slower transit to the West Cambridge Site but crucially, offers a route to the Cambridge Biomedical Campus via the M11. Furthermore, in-road interventions would significantly improve bus times to the existing M11 slip road.

On-road route journey time between Cambourne and Addenbrookes Outpatients at the Cambridge Biomedical Campus is 35 minutes before 9 am on weekdays (best case scenario).

Employment figures for three of the four major employment centres are as follows:

Cambridge Biomedical Campus	West Cambridge Site	Science & Business Park
23,000	4000	7,250

I could not find employment figures for Cambridge City centre.

The Centre for Economics and Business Research (CEBR) estimates that the number of people working at the Biomedical Campus will double to 46,000 people in the next 10 years. The potential annual economic impact by 2035 is between £8.8bn and £10.7bn per Annum and by 2050, it has the potential to increase to between £12.7bn and £18.2bn per Annum.

Essentially the GCP's off-road scheme appears to miss entirely the very crucial objective of getting people to Cambridge's main employment centre, the Cambridge Biomedical Campus.

Context of Other transport initiatives

According to the local transport policy, any new transport initiative should work together and complement existing and new initiatives. Has the busway project been operating in a silo? In

isolation from other programmes? It was interesting to see a statement of case objecting to the GCP's route by East West rail. East-West Rail write in their statement of Case **"the proposed CtoC busway crosses the planned route of EWR on land that the Secretary of State has safeguarded for the new railway."**

In Peter Freeman's Proof of Evidence, he states that EWR will provide a link to Cambridge South station and then onto Cambridge station. EWR promises journey times of just 15 minutes between Cambourne and Cambridge central and a further 3 minutes to the new Cambridge South station at the Biomedical campus. East West rail will start delivering passengers from Cambourne to Cambridge by 2034. The CPPF proposal can be implemented cheaply, faster and with broader community support, delivering passengers to Cambridge and the Biomedical Campus in the interim period before EWR is completed.

The cost of the C2C Busway programme is starving other higher value transport projects from going ahead in this region. For example, the much-needed Ely Junction upgrade is currently stalled as the Transport Secretary stated this Summer that there are not enough funds available to move it forward. Thirty-one MPs, 20 business organisations, 11 council leaders and three university vice chancellors have signed the letter to the transport secretary. In the letter it is written **"The scheme has been in the pipeline for decades with the case for it strengthening year on year. Lack of progress is now restricting growth and the regions progress to cleaner, greener transport connections"**.

True Cost of the off-Road Route

When I first made my objection to the off-road route, the estimated costs of the scheme were £192,284,900 as detailed on page 3 of the document with title "Estimate of Costs", revision number 00 with date November 2024. Since then, the GCP has proposed transplanting a number of ancient apple trees at Coton Orchard which will take over three years and perhaps have to adjust designs to accommodate the proposed EWR rail line. It is worth reminding the inspectors that the previous busway project in 2011 overran by a staggering 76% from the original estimates of £84M, eventually costing £148M.

If we apply the same overrun percentage to this proposed scheme the total cost to the tax payer will be £339M.

Urge Site Visit

The environmental cost of the off-road scheme is high and I'm sure that the representatives of Coton Orchard and the CPPF will provide comprehensive information to the inspectors. I will however question the GCP's assertion that the impact to Madingley Wood and the American cemetery of an on-road scheme is greater than that of the impact to Coton Orchard by the off-road route. I would urge the inspectors to carry out a site visit to both the American cemetery and Madingley Wood if they have not done so already.

Biodiversity Impact Madingley Woods

Furthermore, OAR scored the on-road scheme a '1' for Biodiversity impact which means a "Significant Negative" impact. The justification for the score was based on feedback by Natural England that the route **'could'** impact the boundary of Madingley Wood and the author of the report writes that **the route has potential for increasing traffic along Madingley Road**. Am I stating the obvious by saying that the road is already there, it exists and that any reconfiguration done for an on-road scheme must surely only score a 4 which means neutral impact.

Missing Natural England Consultation Document

I would ask that inspectors seek clarification from Natural England. Only a selected excerpt is included in the report by WSP. Natural England's consultation document is not included in the submission pack suggesting perhaps they were also critical of the off-road scheme especially, regarding the destruction of natural habitats in Coton Orchard.

Biodiversity Impact of American cemetery

The statement regarding the impact to the American Cemetery by Natural England is subjective. In between the verge next to the road and the Outer wall of the Cemetery is about 200 yards of car parking space including a driveway. A score of '2' – moderate impact is given to the on-road option for Landscape impact equal to the off-road scheme which ploughs through greenbelt meadows and natural habitats at Coton Orchard.

Biodiversity Impact to Coton Orchard Downplayed

The biodiversity impact to Coton Orchard is downplayed in the report. The scoring receives a '2' which means a medium negative impact instead of a '1' Significant negative impact. The section reads:

Quote from OAR

"The off-road option has a moderate adverse impact on the habitats between Coton Orchard and the M11, but otherwise all habitats or receptors are slightly impacted or have a neutral impact. These off-route assessments would be mitigated by planting and habitat creation. There is potential to increase biodiversity by additional compensation planting." Natural England have been advising the GCP against a route that would impact Coton orchard for some considerable time. Why has this not been mentioned.

Finally moving onto the Option Appraisal Report Re-evaluation

Options Appraisal report High level Evaluation Criteria or Themes

This report, published in December 2018, was pivotal in the decision making of which route option was to be the preferred option. It was prepared by the consultancy firm Mott Macdonald on instruction by the GCP and positioned a scoring framework giving the impression of some level of structure to the process.

The scoring uses a 7-point scoring system, with 1 - 3 being a negative impact, 4 being no impact or as existing, and 5 - 7 being positive impacts.

The themes are;

- Policy Fit
- Contribution to
 - Economic Growth
 - Improved Transport network
 - Quality of life
- Scheme Deliverability
- Stakeholder Support

Due to my lack of time and resources I have analysed three of the themes, Policy fit and Contribution to quality of life and Stakeholder Support.

Policy Fit

The On-road scheme scores higher against all six policy documents because it can deliver passengers to the Cambridge Biomedical Campus quicker by 30 minutes than the off-road route and is 10% of the cost.

- The Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Local Transport Plan (LTP)
- The Highways England Road Investment Strategy (RIS)
- Greater Cambridge and Peterborough Strategic Economic Plan (SEP)
- Greater Cambridge City Deal
- South Cambridgeshire Local Plan
- Cambridge Local Plan

The CPPF proposal scores higher owing to these key factors:

- Maximising Access to Major Employment Centres and Supporting Economic Growth
- Deliverability and Integration with Existing Networks
- Maximising Value for Money and Efficient Use of Resources
- Enhancing Network Capacity, Accessibility and Sustainable Connectivity
- Direct Support for the Cambridge Biomedical Campus and Major Employment Growth (policy 17 Local Plan)

Contribution to quality of life

The Three criteria for this theme that I can comment are

Environmental impacts to

- Biodiversity
- Heritage
- Green Belt

On Biodiversity I have already challenged the notion that any on-road route has significant impacts to Madingley Wood or the American Cemetery and that a score of '2' moderate impact must be scrutinised by the inspectors. A score of '4' neutral or as is impact would be more appropriate. I have highlighted that the impact to Cotton Orchard by the off-road scheme has been downplayed, I cannot see why that would not score a '1', highest negative impact to biodiversity.

On heritage I have highlighted that the impact to American Cemetery has been exaggerated by Natural England and that a site visit by inspectors is recommended. Again, a score of '4' neutral would seem sensible.

Finally on Green belt I cannot understand why the off-road scheme does not score a '1', significant negative impact, when it ploughs through such a significant and sensitive green belt area. Again, I would urge the inspectors to review this scoring.

Stakeholder Support

There is only one evaluation criteria under this theme which is Public Acceptability where both the on-road and off-road schemes score a '6' Significantly Positive. The scoring completely ignores the first consultation in 2015 involving 20,000 postcards and the leafletting of 8000 households and with 2193 respondents to the survey. The reason it has not been included is because the 66.8% of votes were in favour of the on-road option and 65.5% explicitly opposed the off-road route.

The OAR considered the second consultation in 2018 with 2020 respondents and where still 58% of respondents preferred one of the on-road options. However, the survey was written in a way to dilute down the votes by presenting two on-road options resulting in the most favoured option winning 40% of the votes. This tactic was used to narrow the gap with the off-road votes but still by not a big enough margin. The GCP finally justified the off-road option by commissioning small focus groups of 42 people with a majority of people from areas with stronger support for the off-road route. The voting in these groups not surprising showed stronger support for the off-road route.

Conclusion

Given the information we have today I would recommend that the inspectors review the scoring and compare the CPPF on-road route option with the proposed GCP off-road option using this framework.

There are thousands of pages of documentation and I have helped bring to the attention of the inspectors, some key areas of bias in the Option Appraisal Report. The GCPs homework desperately needs marking by an impartial and objective reviewer.

I do hope that the inspectors arrive at the same conclusion as me, in that the GCP's off-road route is poor value for money and environmentally damaging and that the community of Cambridge has given the GCP an excellent alternative in the CPPF on-road route proposal.

Thank you for listening.

Addendum

Adams Road

The Adams Road route scored higher than the route via Bin Brooke but the scores have not been revisited since the designs have been updated.

Regarding Biodiversity impact, the report writes:

"To access the Adams Road option in area 5 there is potential for ponds to be lost that are potentially habitats for great crested newt, and a loss of the urban woodland that surrounds the ponds."

This is actually the man-made pond adjacent to Wilberforce Sports ground and was constructed in 2018, only 7 years ago. I frequently see dog walkers letting their dog's bath in this pond disturbing the sediment and contaminating the water. It is also surrounded by tarmac making it highly unlikely for great crested newts from the Adams Road Bird Sanctuary to ever go there.

Adams road is not within the green belt.

Turning right out of Adam's is significantly safer than tuning right from the Rifle range.

The OAR Part 1 states, "The proposed route at the former Rifle Range track would avoid the ponds and urban woodland but would impact the Bin Brook City Wildlife Site. In order to mitigate impacts on Bin Brook, a likely crossing design would be a **low bridge** with no change to brook channel dimensions and with opportunity to include mitigation in the design. The proposed route would also impact on Trinity Meadows, as well as vegetation and trees lining the road, some that have Tree Preservation Orders".

The scoring on Page 103 of the OAR Part 1 does not reflect the narrative in the report. Scoring Adams Road, a '2' seems unjustified for journey reliability, it should be neutral as it is possibly one the quietest streets in Cambridge.

The original design described at this stage assumes a small crossing to mitigate environmental impact but the designs have subsequently been updated to a significant structure over Bin Brooke and to be high enough to withstand a 1 in a 1000-year flood event.

The public acceptability score is blatantly incorrect; there has been citywide public outcry about the route traversing over the West Fields and documented in the results of the first consultation. A suitable cycle route solution for Adams Road has not been considered yet I'm sure with the right people involved, a suitable design can be agreed.

There are no passengers to pick up and drop off along the route of the Rifle range, buses should be routed through areas where people live, that is their purpose.

Finally, how can the scheme costs be the same when the construction of the Bin Brooke crossing will now be a significant cost? The narrative in the report on cost is not consistent with the scoring. The original costing for the Bin Brooke bridge alone was nearly £2M and that excluded the land take and route leading up to the bridge and costs along the rifle range. The ongoing maintenance costs will also be significantly higher. I believe the costs have escalated since, after it was realised, the structure needed to be significantly raised above the ground.

I would like to also point out that prominent local politicians live in the North Newnham area along with active members of political parties that may have influenced the democratic process within the county council. Have any of these people been attending the North Newnham residents Association meetings or events?