

OBJECTION TO THE
CAMBRIDGE SOUTH EAST TRANSPORT SCHEME FOR A PUBLIC TRANSPORT ROUTE
BETWEEN THE TRAVEL HUB NEAR THE A11 TO THE A1307 AND THE CAMBRIDGE
BIOMEDICAL CAMPUS

This is an overwhelmingly flawed proposal to provide a hugely expensive and environmentally damaging eight kilometer long guided busway to primarily link a park and ride carpark facility at the A11 to the BioMedical centre at Addenbrookes . I emlore the Department of Transport to carefully sift out the fundamental planning issues from all the additional detail submitted with this Application.

As with all large infrastructure projects an enormous amount of information is submitted much of which is detail and this can distract attention from looking at the fundamental issues .

The origins of this proposal go back to 2016 when the Cambridge City Deal obtained funding to look at infrastructure around Cambridge. The thought then was that the developing Bio Medical Centres at Granta, Babraham and Addenbrookes would want an independent transport link. The enthusiasm for this decline probably because both Granta and Babraham had adequate carparking and Granta had already set up a bus service to Cambridge. By 2018 the City Deal had developed into the GCP and the Cambridge South East Transport looked at the transport links. At that time the then Mayor was an advocate of off road mass rapid transport for Cambridge and this route was renamed as a Mass Rapid Transit Route despite the fact that there was no mass and with all the proposed stops not rapid . This proposal has further adapted and there is now no linkage to either Granta or Babraham which are both a kilometer distance away. The proposals make little pretence to be a serious link into the centre of Cambridge. It is a park and ride facility for those that travel to the Bio Medical facilities by car from the southeast and the GCP describe it as such.

“ The CSET scheme will deliver a new guided busway from the Cambridge Biomedical Campus to the A11 near Babraham”

If this proposal was not so flawed it wouldn't have raised so much opposition from the villages of Babraham, Sawston, Stapleford and Shelford. It wouldn't have created the “Better Ways for Busways “ joint opposition. It wouldn't have lead to 7000 local people signing a petition. The “Better Ways for Busways” submitted a well prepared alternative proposal,in effect resurrecting the existing A1307 route which the GCP itself had already put forward . In 2018 the GCP put forward three routes, two of which used the existing A1307, the other, the offroad route now submitted. In the survey using the A1307 had by far the greatest support but the GCP took the view that the options for the A1307 route had to be considered separately and argued that the offroad option was therefore the most popular ! Is it just a coincidence that this was the route that the then Mayor favoured ? The A1307 is the logical solution on all counts, simply just make better use of the shorter existing route which is quicker, environmentally less damaging and considerably cheaper. A site visit to view the offroad route compared to the existing A1307 would make it abundantly clear as to why this proposal should be rejected.

WHY IS IT FLAWED ?

THE CONCEPT

The fundamental point that must not be lost sight of is that the Application makes it very clear that it is not a mass transit system into Cambridge but only a P+R facility for car users that travel from the limited direction of the south east to the Cambridge BioMedical Centre at Addenbrookes.

Those that travel by bus to Cambridge from the south east are unlikely to transfer from the No.13 bus at the A11 P+R, since the No.13 bus hardly stops between this site and Addenbrookes and it then continues onwards to town . The No.13 bus using the A1307 is truly rapid transport compared to changing to the busway which will have the wait time, three stops and five road crossings and in reality only take you to the west side of the Addenbrookes complex.

The proposals state there will be up to eight buses each way per hour and that they will run for around 18 hours a day. This is the sort of service required if it is to attract use, Some guided buses will continue further to Haverhill but would only those that work at the Cambridge BioMedical use it since the No.13 using the A1307 would be quicker and generally more useful ? Outside rush hour the busway would be little used and certainly little used at evenings and weekends. This is not a mass transit system into Cambridge and it would require heavy subsidies or a much reduced service to well under the eight buses per hour.

Mass transit systems require mass and frequency, but if there is no mass will there be the frequency ?

It is most likely that many car users would prefer to continue past the A11 P+R and generally within 10 minutes be at the Babraham Rd. P+R whilst those that use the facility could still be waiting for a guided bus which only takes them to the west side of the Addenbrookes complex.

The Addenbrookes facilities apart from their own parking already have two existing P+R's close at hand at Babraham Rd.and Trumpington Rd. where linking shuttle buses would be a useful addition.

If Addenbrookes needs additional parking space ,as it seems that they do, then this could be built close at hand rather than accessing it via an eight kilometer busway through open countryside. For years it has been obvious that the A1307 near to the Babraham Rd. roundabout needs a direct access into the centre of Addenbrookes. This would make a huge difference to traffic movements in the vicinity since around 60% of the traffic around the A1307 at rush hours is related to Addenbrookes. A new access road could be used by buses as well as vehicles and if the additional carparking is required it could more usefully be sited here close at hand rather than 8 kilometers away only catering for the southeast.A parking facility here would be of greater use for those that travel from the north and west .

The construction of this 8 kilometer long P+R for the BioMedical Centre is hugely expensive for a limited use P+R facility .They started talking of 40m in 2018 and by 2023 it had risen to 160m and the Application is still stating 160m in 2025. These figures must be highly suspect when the project requires a lot of engineering work on difficult land including two concrete bridges each around 130m long plus a third bridge over sensitive landscape. Building costs have risen steeply over the last couple of years and no doubt as the project has developed costs would have only increased. These cost figures require close scrutiny otherwise the project could easily run into a HS2 situation and as with HS2 the basic concept would then be questioned in hindsight. Here there is the opportunity to avoid this and spend considerably less to arrive at more constructive solution .

Over the last eight years millions have been spent on consultants fees pursuing off road solutions to Cambridge traffic issues largely from an idealogical point of view .This Application exaggerates this further since this is not primarily looked at as an improvement for access into Cambridge but a clearly intended project to provide a limited access P+R for the BioMedical Centre eight kilometres away.

In order to do this the busway will damage much open countryside . It is not a simple route over open farmland, there are sensitive landscape areas ,archaeological sites and the Application acknowledges that damage will occur. The damage that will occur is well covered by the various parties who have expressed great concern. This landscape is the most beautiful around Cambridge and contributes to the setting of Wandlebury and Magog Down. Cambridge is under much development pressure and this landscape area becomes ever more important to preserve. To despoil it only to create an off road access from the P+R to the BioMedical Centre eight kilometres away is tragic.

The GCP must be well aware that utilising an on road A1307 option is the most viable solution to connect the P+R to the BioMedical Centre which at the same time could also improve access into Cambridge..It could do this at far less cost and not have to damage a visually important landscape.

OBJECTION SUBMITTED BY

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