

DfT Reference: TWA/24/APP/03

Document Reference: CD26-01-APP-W3-3

The Cambourne to Cambridge Order

Cambridgeshire County Council

Transport and Works Act 1992

Transport and Works (Inquiries Procedure) Rules 2004

Inquiry into:

THE CAMBOURNE TO CAMBRIDGE ORDER

SUMMARY PROOF OF EVIDENCE

of

Andy Saunders BA(Hons), MCIEEM, MCIWEM, CENV, CWEM

of WSP

On behalf of Cambridgeshire County Council

14th August 2025

Planning Inspectorate Reference: DPI/E0535/25/1

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 My name is Andy Saunders. I am a Technical Director in the Environment Team at WSP. I hold a BA(Honours) in Geography from the University of Manchester and am a Member of the Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management (MCIWEM), a Member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM), a Chartered Environmentalist (CEnv) and a Chartered Water and Environmental Manager (CWEM). I am also a certified and approved trainer in Advanced Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment. I have over 30 years' of experience of managing and directing EIAs for major infrastructure projects and acted as an expert witness in relation to environmental matters for transport infrastructure schemes in England, Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland.
- 1.2 This document is my summary Proof of Evidence on behalf of Cambridgeshire County Council, focusing on the EIA for the Cambourne to Cambridge Scheme. It addresses the environmental considerations, methodology, findings, mitigation measures, and responses to certain aspects raised through objections to the Scheme, which proposes a new 13.6 km public transport route including a dedicated busway, active travel paths and a travel hub.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1 The evidence covers the approach and findings of the EIA as reported in the Environmental Statement (ES) and two Addendums, focusing on likely significant effects across multiple environmental topics such as air quality, noise, traffic, community health, ecology, landscape, heritage, water, soils, material use, greenhouse gases, climate resilience and cumulative effects. It also responds to certain matters raised in objections from statutory and non-statutory objectors, comprising the Environment Agency, Coton Busway Action Group, Gough Way Residents Association, PX Land Limited and L. Hirst.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT STRUCTURE AND DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1 The ES is structured to provide a clear, accessible summary of the environmental impacts and mitigation measures, supported by technical reports covering specific topics. The ES includes a Non-Technical Summary and a Mitigation Register listing over 60 environmental mitigation measures. The design of the Scheme has evolved considering environmental, community, and technical factors, with embedded mitigation and monitoring plans secured through planning conditions and a draft Code of Construction Practice (CoCP).

4. SCHEME DESCRIPTION

- 4.1 The Scheme includes a dedicated busway, with an emergency and maintenance access track which can also be used for active travel modes, and a new travel hub at Scotland Farm. It aims to provide reliable, sustainable transport linking Cambourne, Bourn Airfield, Hardwick, Coton and West Cambridge campus to the city.

5. KEY ENVIRONMENTAL FINDINGS

- 5.1 The key environmental findings by topic can be summarised as follows:

Health and Community Impacts

- The Scheme offers significant health benefits by improving connectivity to health facilities, facilitating active travel and improving air quality.
- Temporary construction noise and vibration impacts are predicted at several locations but are not expected to adversely affect health.
- A construction site near Bin Brook will temporarily displace 1.5 ha of farmland, a significant adverse effect for the tenant farmer.
- New active travel routes will provide a very large permanent beneficial effect for walkers, cyclists, and horse riders.

- One bridleway (39/30) will be permanently diverted, resulting in a moderate adverse and significant effect, though the path is little used.

Footpath 55/2 Impact

- Footpath 55/2, running between A1303 Madingley Road and High Street, Coton, will be crossed by the Scheme. During construction, it will remain open with minor temporary management for safety. In operation, a new at-grade uncontrolled crossing will be provided, resulting in a permanent slight adverse effect assessed as not significant. Surveys indicate low usage of this footpath, including minimal use around Coton Primary School start and finish times, supporting the conclusion of a non-significant operational effect .

Air Quality

- The Scheme is predicted to improve air quality at most receptor locations, with no significant adverse effects during construction or operation.
- Construction emissions will be controlled via the CoCP, ensuring negligible impacts.

Noise and Vibration

- Significant temporary construction noise effects are predicted at six receptors, including locations at Childerley Gate and Scotland Road.
- Potential vibration effects predicted at sensitive research facilities in West Cambridge will be managed through consultation and mitigation.
- Operational night-time noise could potentially be significant at some Cambourne homes and Clare Hall student accommodation but is expected to be mitigated by lower bus frequency at night and the use of electric buses. The level above which significant adverse effects on health and quality of life occur (Significant Observed Adverse Effect Level) would not be exceeded during the day or night-time.

Traffic and Transport

- Construction traffic increases will be low, with no significant adverse effects predicted on severance, delays or safety.
- Three public rights of way will be temporarily affected during construction, with measures to maintain access.
- Bridleway 39/30 will be permanently diverted, resulting in a moderate adverse and significant effect.

Ecology

- Significant adverse effects (at a county scale) are predicted on Coton Orchard, a County Wildlife Site, due to habitat loss including traditional orchard and hedgerows.
- The Scheme commits to delivering a biodiversity net gain (BNG) of at least 10%, aiming for 20%, contributing to local and national nature recovery networks.
- Mitigation includes habitat creation, mammal culverts, retention of green corridors and specific measures for veteran trees and bats.

Landscape and Visual

- Temporary significant adverse effects on landscape character will occur around Coton and Hardwick during construction.
- Permanent significant effects on landscape and visual receptors near Coton and east of Hardwick will reduce over time due to mitigation planting.
- Permanent significant visual effects are predicted for certain properties and footpath users, notably along footpath 55/2 where effects will be permanent.

Heritage

- No physical impact on designated heritage assets is predicted except for minor alterations to create a junction within West Cambridge Conservation Area.
- There would be minor and non-significant impacts on conservation areas and listed buildings.
- Archaeological mitigation will reduce potential significant effects to negligible.
- The Scheme will not affect the setting of the American Military Cemetery.

Water and Flooding

- The Scheme incorporates design measures such as a clear-span bridge over Bin Brook and sustainable drainage systems to avoid significant effects on water resources and flood risk.
- No significant effects are predicted during construction or operation.

Soils, Geology, and Land Contamination

- Up to 39 hectares of Best and Most Versatile Land (BMVL) will be permanently occupied, representing a significant adverse effect.
- Temporary land used during construction will be reinstated following best practice.
- Risks from contaminated land are limited and will be addressed during detailed design.

Material Use and Waste

- Approximately 211,000 tonnes of soil and earth will be excavated; 80% is expected to be reused on site.
- Waste to landfill will be less than 1% of regional capacity, with no significant effects predicted.
- The CoCP requires sustainable material use and waste management.

Greenhouse Gases and Carbon

- The Scheme is reported in the ES to estimate a net carbon reduction of approximately 5,020 tonnes carbon dioxide equivalent over the assessment period. This is a minor benefit. An updated assessment estimates a reduction of (-)7,055 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent over the assessment period.
- Construction carbon impacts will be managed through carbon management plans.

Climate Resilience

- The Scheme is designed to be resilient to climate change impacts such as extreme precipitation, temperature and wind.
- No significant effects are predicted regarding climate resilience.

Cumulative Effects

- No significant cumulative effects are predicted from other nearby developments, except potential cumulative construction noise if works coincide.
- Additional mitigation can be applied if needed.

6. RESPONSES TO OBJECTIONS

6.1 I have dealt with certain environmental matters raised in relation to objections from Coton Busway Action Group (carbon and footpath severance), Gough Way Residents Association (impact on farming land), PX Land Limited (disruption from construction and maintenance). In addition, I have dealt with the status of progress in relation to the Environment Agency's objection and in relation to updated carbon calculations which have been raised in an objection by L Hirst. Other matters raised through these objections have been addressed in other Proofs of Evidence where relevant.

Coton Busway Action Group (OBJ 143)

- The claim that the alternative CPPF scheme would have much lower construction carbon is contested; both schemes require significant construction and share sections.
- Operational carbon could be higher for the CPPF alternative due to traffic diverting to alternative routes.
- Footpath 55/2 severance is managed with a safe at-grade crossing and low footpath usage, minimising impact.

Gough Way Residents Association (OBJ 175)

- The Scheme results in significant adverse effects on BMVL but includes measures to minimise temporary impacts and complies with planning policies overall.

PX Land Limited (OBJ 252)

- Construction disruption to residential properties will be minimised through the CoCP and Construction Traffic Management Plan.
- Maintenance disturbance is not expected to be significant.

Environment Agency (OBJ301)

- The Environment Agency's concerns over flood risk modelling and groundwater protection are being addressed and at the time of writing it is believed that their concerns have been satisfactorily resolved and that the modelling and conclusions of the ES can be relied on as robust.
- Pollution prevention and contamination risks will be managed during construction.

L Hirst (OBJ279)

- Industry standards have been used to calculate greenhouse gas emissions. In addition, the calculations have been updated to reflect updated factors and the conclusions of the ES are unchanged (i.e. a minor beneficial effect).

7. CONCLUSIONS

7.1 The EIA as reported in the ES and ES Addendums demonstrates that the Cambourne to Cambridge Scheme has been assessed in accordance with legal and best practice standards. While some significant adverse effects are identified, particularly related to agricultural land, ecology, noise during construction, and landscape impacts near Coton, these are mitigated through design, management, and compensation measures.

7.2 The Scheme offers benefits including improved active travel infrastructure, reduced greenhouse gas emissions, enhanced connectivity, and biodiversity net gain. No significant cumulative effects are anticipated beyond manageable construction noise overlaps. The objections raised have been addressed with appropriate evidence and mitigation commitments.