

Oral Proof of Evidence Notes– Rob Sadler

Introduction

Good morning Inspectors. My name is Rob Sadler, and I appear on behalf of my family J&WR Sadler, as directly affected landowners.

I want to be clear; I am not presenting new technical evidence. These are straightforward observations based on public information and the Applicant's own material. Until this Inquiry, we as directly affected landowners were not given sufficient information needed to comment in detail. If we had been meaningfully consulted at an early stage many of the concerns could and should have been raised then. It is for that reason my oral summary is more comprehensive.

At the outset, our concern was with the off-road section. Having now heard the Applicants evidence, it has become increasingly difficult to see how the scheme as a whole delivers for Cambourne residents. That broader concern has only become clear through the Inquiry process itself.

This process has been a huge ordeal for my family and we are learning as we go. By contrast, the Applicant is represented by professionals whose sole focus is major infrastructure projects with a significant budget.

Part A: Personal Experience & Procedural Failings

A1. Correction of Evidence

Before beginning, I want to correct, or at the very least question, a statement made by Mr Baker on Tuesday 23 September 2025, four days after he had given his Proof of Evidence. On that morning, Mr Cameron asked him a prepared question about the Comberton to Cambridge Greenways. Mr Baker suggested that no agreement had been reached between the GCP and J&WR Sadler in relation to potential land acquisition for the Comberton to Cambridge Greenways.

Following the advice from the Inspectors I was asked to raise this point today:

1. **12 December 2024** – I wrote to Mr Jonathan Camp, Senior Project Manager for the GCP Greenways project: "Jonathan, I haven't received any dates from you to meet. Can I assume you are exploring options to keep the Greenway on the existing bridleway? An update would be great and I remain keen to meet."
2. **15 December 2024** – Mr Camp replied: "We are exploring what can be achieved by bringing the Greenways forward on the existing bridleway alignment. Therefore, I don't think there is a need for us to meet at this moment in time."
3. **15 December 2024** – I responded the same day: "That is reassuring news. Thank you for the update."

I have heard nothing further in the ten months since from the GCP in connection with the Greenways project. As the emails show, I actively chased this issue in a constructive way, and the GCP confirmed in writing that no land was required. At the time, Mr Baker's statement may have given a misleading impression of our family's approach.

The irony is that the Comberton to Cambridge Greenway already exists as a continuous footpath into the city, including a pedestrian bridge over the M11, and has done for years. The GCP's plan is essentially to tarmac and widen what is already there, but then to leave that corridor and push into open countryside at the bottom of our field - the very same field as the proposed C2C busway.

A2. Further Inaccuracy in the Record of Engagement

A second example arises in the Applicant's "Record of Engagement" dated 30 July 2025. It records an entry for 7 September 2023 described as:

"Email from R. Sadler advising he will now act for family – change of representation."

That entry is wholly incorrect and without foundation. There was no correspondence from me on that date, or at any other time, in those terms or of that nature. No such email was ever sent.

A3. Lack of Proper Engagement

1. In an email dated 10 October 2024, the Applicant admitted they had only met the landowners twice before April 2024. In reality these were informal visits, not structured or minuted meetings where key concerns could be properly discussed.
2. The same email revealed that the route alignment had been fixed since March 2023, in effect amounting to a design freeze. While the Applicant describes this as "not a formal Design Freeze," they also confirmed it did not allow for a full realignment of the scheme. By any reasonable definition, that was a freeze on meaningful change, and we were not made formally aware until 10 October 2024.
3. The same email suggested that the four public consultations held between 2015 and 2021 were an adequate substitute for direct engagement with landowners. Public exhibitions or general consultations cannot replace proper, formal dialogue with those whose land is subject to compulsory purchase.
4. By the Applicant's own record, the first substantive meeting with the landowners took place in April 2024 - by which time key design decisions were already fixed.
5. No early notification letter was ever received to explain the scheme, the statutory process, or the landowners' rights.
6. No adequate maps or route drawings were provided in the early years. The material we did receive was limited, difficult to interpret, and lacking in clarity. Indeed, at the Inquiry hearing last month, the Inspectors themselves required 30 to 40 minutes to understand the Applicant's plans, and that was with Mr Cameron assisting them.
7. The Applicant must also demonstrate that the scheme complies with relevant equality and accessibility duties. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, all public authorities and anyone exercising public functions including a transport scheme promoter must have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and advance equality of opportunity. This duty applies at every stage of a project, including consultation and early design. There has been no consultation with the landowner who is registered disabled.

Despite over a decade, the Applicant is unable to provide a single agenda, minutes, or file notes prior to April 2024 relating to its dealing with the landowner.

Taken together, this shows the Applicant failed to carry out the early and meaningful engagement with the landowner before seeking compulsory powers.

A4. Direct Impacts on Our Farm

The busway would cut directly through the centre of our farm, severing every field. The land is farmed north-south, so the busway would form a complete east-west barrier.

On an average day, 20-30 separate movements cross the track beside the family burial site, as highlighted during the Inspectors' initial visit. These include tractors, sprayers, staff, visitors, children, grandchildren, and my mother, who is disabled. At peak periods such as harvest, the number is higher.

The Applicant proposes buses running at up to 55mph, yet there has been no meaningful discussion about how unencumbered and safe access will be maintained. Again, plans have been hard to read with no proper explanation. In reality, movements may occur where they are most practical along the route, as they already do across highways nationwide and on the existing guided busway. Has this been considered on the scheme's risk register?

A5. The Family Burial Site

This scheme also affects something of the deepest personal significance: the burial site where my grandparents' ashes were interred in 1992.

The Applicant has long been aware of its presence. Yet the issue was repeatedly downplayed. Since April 2024 I have raised it several times, and each time I was assured the burial site did not fall within the busway. Unsatisfied, I requested a site meeting. On 26 July 2024, the Applicant marked out the full working width of the busway including road, maintenance track, swale, and landscaping bunds. The corridor was approximately 45 metres wide. It became apparent the ashes lie 7 metres within the proposed compulsory acquisition boundary.

Mr Baker acknowledged this - then went on to explain that by saying the ashes were "not within the busway," he was in fact only referring to the narrow 7.4 metre tarmac strip for buses only. In writing, on 6 August 2024, he went on to confirm:

"The ashes will not be under the busway (tarmac road). To be clear, the landscaping either side of the busway is not the actual busway."

My family, particularly my parents found the response disingenuous. It minimised the impact by ignoring the reality that the whole 45-metre corridor would be compulsorily acquired. Responsibility for relocating the ashes was placed on my elderly parents. That is insensitive and would never have arisen if proper care and consultation had been exercised from the outset.

I do not use the word disingenuous lightly. It reflects how my family experienced the Applicants response and the distressed caused.

A6. Safety and Emergency Response

Experience on the existing Cambridgeshire guided busway already shows the risks. To my understanding, dozens of incidents of vehicles illegally entering the track have been officially recorded in recent years, many involving stolen vehicles. The Health and Safety Executive has already prosecuted the County Council, and further fencing has recently been approved to address continuing problems.

The new section proposed west of the city, between Cambridge Road (Coton) and Comberton Long Road, would be:

1. Over 2km long of smooth tarmac, dead straight, with no intersections, no fencing, no lighting and no calming measures.
2. To a layperson, it has characteristics of a racetrack rather than a public transport corridor.

The Applicant suggests barriers could be added later if misuse becomes a problem. In my view, misuse is not a remote risk, it is likely from day one, as supported by incidents on other busways. These risks should appear explicitly in the scheme's Risk Register.

Emergency response is also a concern and confusing. The parallel path is designated as a "maintenance and emergency access route," shared with cyclists and pedestrians. Yet:

1. It is only 3.5 metres wide. Fire engines or ambulances may struggle to travel at speed, especially when sharing with cyclists and pedestrians.
2. In wet, dark winter conditions, emergency vehicles and crews would face a swale that will be waterlogged for the majority of the year. In some of the Applicant's illustrations (for example, bat

crossing points) there appear to be soil bunds with dense planting to cross before accessing the busway road.

3. There are also landowner security concerns. If the scheme proceeds, it is not unreasonable to require, on both sides within the outer landscaping bunds of the land to be acquired: 2m high soil bunds, a deep ditch, hedgerow, and five-bar post-and-rail fence or similar to prevent unwanted criminal access. Security has previously been raised as an issue but we have not been given the opportunity to discuss the detail with the Applicant or received any proposals. This should be reflected in the landscape and visual impact assessment.

To add further, the Applicant appears to have given no or little consideration to the drainage implications of severing the existing farm land across Madingley Hill from Comberton Long Road and Cambridge Road Coton in particular. The land immediately North of the proposed busway comprises of approximately 300 acres running up to the A1303. It lies on higher ground to the busway and is well drained and we heard from Mr Peck last month how important drainage is to farming.

The proposed alignment would effectively sever the entire drainage system preventing surface and field run off from draining North to South. In such circumstances the extensive amounts of water will be directed towards the busway and swales in particular along the busway. Even if the Applicant argues that this is not the intended purpose of the swale, the fact remains that I cannot find evidence of an assessment by the Applicant.

Part B: Scheme Out of Date – The Existing Route (Not a New Alternative)

B1. Purpose vs Delivery

When the C2C scheme was first conceived, its stated purpose was to connect Cambourne residents with jobs and education in Cambridge. That remains the right ambition.

I do not believe the GCP has ever provided a breakdown of destinations for users wishing to travel from Cambourne and this point has been made previously by Mr Leigh in his Proof of Evidence. Conversely, I cannot find a 'travel to work survey' or similar for the West Cambridge site. All other science and business parks in the Cambridge area will have one and regularly review it to support initiatives such as car sharing, cycle provisions and private bus services paid for by the parks.

B2. Personal Observations on Scotland Farm Park & Ride

Unlike the proposed Scotland Farm P&R, all existing P&R sites are located either within the Cambridge city boundary or just on its edge. Scotland Farm sits much further out by comparison.

Staff travelling to West Cambridge site already have Madingley Road P&R opposite, within a short walking distance. Residents of Cambourne and Bourn Airfield will board the bus locally. Longer-distance drivers will continue on the £1.5 billion upgraded A14 and will use Milton P&R instead.

I tested this myself. Scotland Farm to Milton P&R (along the A428/A14) took approx. 7 minutes without exceeding 65mph on the dual carriageways. The bus service from Milton P&R to the city is timetabled at 15–20 minutes, using the new bus-priority corridors and segregated cycleways on Milton Road. That gives a total journey time of approximately 25-35 minutes, compared with the alternative of around 40 minutes using C2C route from Scotland Farm P&R, with the added risk of longer onward times once the buses reach Grange Road particularly peak times and weekends.

In fact, from Scotland Farm, you could drive and park at any of the other P&Rs – Milton, Madingley Road, Newmarket Road or Trumpington – and regularly reach the city more quickly, or in the worst case, in a similar time to C2C. Even Babraham Road, which is located on the far side of Cambridge, is broadly comparable. Furthermore, the Biomedical Campus will be served by a new P&R to the south-west of the city, opening next year and providing 12 buses per hour to the Campus. It would be quicker to drive directly to this P&R from Scotland Farm, rather than drive to Scotland farm and take a bus all the way to

the Biomedical Campus. Equally, travelling along the A428 and A14 to Cambridge North and continuing by train through to the Biomedical Campus would be faster and more direct than C2C.

In reality, it is difficult to see who would use Scotland Farm Park and Ride. During Questioning last week, Mr Cameron put forward a hypothetical scenario to Mr Leigh concerning large numbers of tourists that might use the P&R. I find this unlikely as most tourists will use one of the existing, more conveniently located park and rides. **Less time on the bus. Quicker overall journey times.**

B3. The Existing Cambourne Corridor

The striking fact is that the public has already paid for infrastructure that achieves the same goal - faster, cheaper, more reliable, and sooner.

1. The £1.5 billion A14 upgrade, completed in 2020, has significantly reduced congestion and improved reliability on the approach to Cambridge.
2. Cambridge North station opened in 2017, with a direct 4–5 minute rail link into Cambridge (central) station. Within a couple of months, Cambridge South will also open at the Biomedical Campus further strengthening direct rail connectivity.
3. From Cambourne, buses could simply run along the A428 (dual carriageway), merge onto the A14 (three-lane dual carriageway to motorway standard), exit at the Histon junction and join the guided busway at Orchard Park. From there, buses would continue on existing segregated, traffic-free infrastructure with dedicated stops at three major destinations: education, employment, and rail.

The viability of this corridor is not hypothetical. The 905 (Bedford–Cambridge) service used it for a period, and in 2022 Stagecoach considered moving the Citi 4 service onto the same alignment, before instead accepting a subsidy to keep it on its existing path. I do not believe the Applicant has explained why such a direct and proven route is not reflected in their assessment of options.

Using this existing alignment, a Cambourne to Cambridge journey would take approximately 30- 35 minutes with greater certainty - compared with the Applicant's 45-minute projection for C2C, which remains uncertain beyond Grange Road. This is not about proposing another alternative route, it is about using infrastructure that already exists, and which the public has already paid for.

B4. Key Intermediate Destinations

C2C misses the most important education and employment sites. The existing northern route already serves them directly via the segregated guided busway:

1. **Stop 1 - Cambridge Regional College (CRC):** Around 10,000 registered students - the city's largest further education provider. The C2C route does not serve it at all.
2. **Stop 2 - North Cambridge employment cluster:** Cambridge Science Park, St John's Innovation Park, Cambridge Business Park, and the expanding developments around Cambridge North station already provide well over 3 million sq ft of workspace, with projections of up to 25,000 jobs in the coming years.
3. **Stop 3 - Cambridge North Station:** Provides direct onward rail to Cambridge (Central) and, within a couple of months, to Cambridge South serving the Biomedical Campus - Europe's largest life science and healthcare cluster.
4. There is also the option for buses to continue via the Milton Road/Histon Road bus priority corridors into the city centre. These works completed earlier this year at an estimated cost of £32 million.

B5. Cambridge West

The land to the west of Cambridge, encompassing both the West Cambridge site and Eddington, forms part of a single, University-led development area conceived and delivered by the University of Cambridge.

Madingley Road forms the main spine, with the University owned Madingley Road Park and Ride between the two sites, acting as a shared transport gateway.

Unlike all of Cambridge's commercial and science parks, which compete for tenants and generate large commuter flows, the West Cambridge site is an academic University Campus, with only a handful of external commercial occupants. The University states that its purpose is to "provide an academic and research environment for the University's physical science-based faculties", comprising "academic departments, research institutes and commercial research. The latter (commercial) meaning University led collaboration, not open or third party commercial tenancy (University of Cambridge Accommodation Service). The Estates Division reinforces this describing a "world class sustainable and integrated campus that fosters collaboration between departments, institutes and industry partners within a University controlled academic setting".

Accordingly, the west Cambridge site will continue to function as a University research campus, not an open commercial business park. Any industry presence exists only through joint research partnerships embedded in the University's estate strategy.

Eddington provides the mixed-use residential element – an urban quarter including schools, retail and community facilities including 1500 homes for University and College key workers at subsidised rents and purpose-built accommodation for about 2,000 postgraduates. This key worker housing replaces the conventional affordable element of a mixed-use development and is reserved for University employees only.

This integrated approach locating staff housing alongside the University's main academic sites was deliberately intended to align housing with employment and thereby minimise the need for University staff to commute from outlying settlements.

As a result, daily commuting from Cambourne to West Cambridge site is likely to be limited, in contrast with the significant commuting flows seen into Cambridge Regional College, Cambridge Science Park, CB1, and the Biomedical Campus.

B6. The CPPF Alternative

I also want to acknowledge the alternative promoted by Cambridge Past, Present & Future (CPPF), which would keep buses on the existing A1303 corridor rather than building an entirely new off-road alignment. Their approach reflects the same principle I have been making throughout: that improvements should be made to existing infrastructure rather than forcing a brand-new route through Green Belt land.

If there is a case for linking Cambourne to West Cambridge, this could be achieved on-road at far lower cost, consistent with the CPPF approach. Such an option would also avoid impacts on Coton Orchard and address many of the concerns raised by local objectors.

Two key considerations along this corridor are Madingley Wood, and the American Military Cemetery, a Grade I-listed heritage site of the highest importance. Both deserve the utmost respect and protection. However, careful alignment and landscaping could readily mitigate any effect on Madingley Wood, and my family has already indicated our willingness to surrender land along the northern edge of our holding beside the A1303 to help achieve that. With that in place, impacts on Madingley Wood can be effectively avoided.

As someone who has lived and worked opposite the American Cemetery for over 50 years, I have grown up with a deep appreciation for what it represents. Last year I had the privilege of taking part in a short sponsored walk from Churchill College to the Cemetery via the Coton footpath, accompanied by the BBC national TV and my good friend Squadron Leader Colin Bell, a British Second World War veteran now aged 104, who completed 30 mosquito missions over Germany. We were joined by Randolph Churchill, great-grandson of Sir Winston, and it was a humbling reminder of the place the Cemetery holds in both our nations' shared history.

Over the years I have come to know many of the superintendents who have cared for the Cemetery, which is not only a Grade I memorial but also a museum and visitor centre. When I was a boy, my parents

ran a small bed and breakfast at the farm, and it was common for us to welcome families visiting their fallen loved ones - often brothers and sisters making the journey to pay their respects. As time has passed, those numbers have naturally declined, but the Cemetery's role as a place of learning, remembrance, and quiet reflection remains as important as ever.

In that spirit, I can think of nothing more fitting or respectful than a carefully designed pedestrian and cycle route passing its entrance - encouraging families, school groups, and visitors to pause, reflect, and appreciate the history preserved there. Far from detracting from the Cemetery's setting, such a route would honour its continuing purpose: remembrance, education, and connection between generations.

Conclusion

The choice is clear:

1. Spend over £200 million on an off-road busway scheme that cuts through open countryside and Coton Orchard, while still delivering uncertain journey times.
2. Or recognise that existing infrastructure already provides faster, cheaper and more reliable connections for Cambourne residents, without the harm.

Choosing the latter would deliver an enormous saving to the taxpayer at a time of significant fiscal constraint.

Journey Time Sources

1. DfT (May 2020): Confirmed £1.5 billion A14 upgrade "cut journey times by up to 20 minutes."
2. National Rail Timetable: 4–5 minutes between Cambridge North and Cambridge Central.

Worked Example - Cambourne Centre → Cambridge Central (via Cambridge North):

1. Road leg (Cambourne centre → Orchard Park): I drove this route myself, keeping below 55mph and accelerating gently to mimic a bus. Added one minute for completeness. Total: 16 minutes.
2. Guided Busway (Orchard Park → Cambridge North, calling at CRC and Science Park): typical services take 9–11 minutes, including dwell times.
3. Rail (Cambridge North → Cambridge Central): 4–5 minutes.

Indicative total in-vehicle time: 29–32 minutes.

With interchange allowance: 35 minutes.

Note: C2C measures from Sterling Way; my northern route timings are from Cambourne centre (Belfry Hotel) and travelling west to get on to the A428 eastbound. Access via Sterling Way will be quicker, and the infrastructure through the Bourn Airfield development could improve efficiencies.