BIDWELLS

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Date: 7/1/2025

By email only:
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Dear Secretary of State for Transport

TRANSPORT AND WORK ACT ORDER FOR A NEW BUSWAY, AND TRAVEL HUB, AND ALSO PROVIDING A PATH FOR WALKERS AND CYCLISTS LINKING CAMBOURNE TO CAMBRIDGE.

By way of introduction, Bidwells is the appointed agent for Bedlam Farming Company Ltd (BFC) regarding the above Transport and Work Act Order (TWAO) for the new busway between Cambourne and Cambridge (C2C).

Ben Chivers, a Director of BFC is a member of the Chivers Family who have farmed land around Cambridge since the 1850s.

BFC farms over 600 acres in-hand and contract farms in excess of a further 1,200 acres.

The proposed C2C scheme is set to acquire and sever land owned by BFC on the Hardwick section of the route.

BFC understands the intentions of the scheme. However, it is imperative that disturbance to my client is mitigated and kept to an absolute minimum and compensation is paid inf full to cover any losses. It is vital that this scheme does not negatively impact BFC's business; it should continue to operate and thrive.

We believe that the below points need to be adhered to and measures put in place to ensure that the acquiring authority is held responsible for delivering a successful scheme which does not negatively impact affected landowners during or on completion of the works.

Compensation - compensation needs to be assessed and paid fairly; it needs to reflect actual losses.

During the Works – care should be taken to make every effort to minimise damage and disturbance to neighbouring land and businesses. Stopping up highways and putting in diversions should be considered carefully, and any disruption to businesses should be compensated.

Work on the Ground – it is imperative that the acquiring authority employs responsible contractors who will adhere to the agreements made between the acquiring authority's agents and the landowners and their agents. For example, bare ground within the scheme should not be allowed to go to weeds, which will then go to seed and contaminate the neighbouring land.

Communication - the acquiring authority, its agents and contractors must maintain consistent communication lines between themselves, and with the landowners and their agents throughout all phases of the scheme.

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Accommodation Works – where possible, accommodation works should be completed in advance and to a high standard e.g. long-lasting high-quality fencing should be installed at the beginning of the scheme, if it is to remain long term. Landscaping and shielding features should also be completed in advance. New accesses and gates should be installed to a suitable specification. Any new fencing or other structures are to be maintained by the acquiring authority regularly on completion.

Severed Land – the acquiring authority must understand that modern farming practices and tight profit margins mean that smaller awkward shaped land parcels created by the scheme may not be viable to farm, and although they may remain within the landowner's ownership compensation for their loss of use will be payable at the appropriate level.

Landowner Time – landowner time should be compensated at an appropriate level. Landowners do not wish to be involved in these schemes but must engage and assist the acquiring authority and its agents. Often their time is compensated at sub-standard rates; this is unacceptable and does not help build good relations between parties.

This area of the country has been heavily impacted by a number of infrastructure schemes in the past, most recently the A14 improvement scheme. There are also numerous other schemes operating in tandem and planned; these include East West Rail, the Cambridge Greenways, Anglian Water pipelines etc. My client is affected by several of these schemes, whilst also running a successful farming and property company. The acquiring authority must ensure that this scheme causes my client as little disturbance as possible. Affected landowners should be compensated fairly and correctly to ensure they are in no worse position than without the scheme.

Kind regards

Dani Kilsby-Steele
Partner, Rural