

10th June 2020

To: all Cambridgeshire County Councillors

Dear County Councillor,

I write to you as Chair of the Local Liaison Forum (LLF) for the Cambourne to Cambridge busway scheme (C2C).

The LLF comprises elected representatives from right along the proposed C2C route, and has been advising the Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) on local issues and concerns for the past four years.

This scheme has been highly controversial from the outset – the many reasons for this are outlined below. However, opposition is intensifying, as witnessed at our LLF meeting on 2nd June, which can be watched at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nQ9UPe03HBQ>

A final decision on proceeding with the scheme, which would cost the taxpayer upwards of £200 million, will be taken by the GCP Executive Board on June 25th. The LLF is urging the GCP to reconsider the current proposal in light of (i) the scheme's inadequate transport benefits; (ii) its major impact on the environment and communities along the route; and (iii) the fact it does not take into consideration either the decision to route the East-West Rail line via Cambourne or compliance with the emerging CAM proposals. Indeed it reduces the ability to make the right decisions on those larger schemes later.

Representatives from right along the proposed route, including from Cambourne itself, met on June 2nd, (see appendix 1 for list of attendees), to discuss the issue. Delegates passed the following resolution unopposed (21 in favour; 1 abstention):

The LLF opposes a premature decision on the current Cambourne to Cambridge busway scheme. It is unfit for purpose, anachronistic and environmentally damaging, and is now out of step with emerging proposals for EW Rail & CAM. The LLF recommends a pause until:

- (i) The Mayor's CAM consultation has concluded, and his proposed route – suitable for autonomous vehicles, MRT and adaptable into a metro – is published.*
- (ii) The location of the new EWR station in Cambourne is confirmed, and the business case for the busway re-worked in light of its impact. This is a multi-billion pound scheme that needs to be thoroughly understood first.*

In the meantime, we support the development of interim high-quality bus priority measures and/or improved services on existing infrastructure, that can support the local plan and provide immediate transport benefits to key employment locations whilst the bigger picture falls into place.

The overwhelming belief is that this is the wrong time to make the decision on such an expensive piece of infrastructure. Please impress on the County's representative on the GCP Executive Board the need to consider the implications of the LLF resolution, and reconsider the scheme accordingly.

There are multiple reasons for increasing opposition to the C2C scheme.

1. There are significant doubts about its compatibility with much bigger schemes currently under development:

(i) The emerging CAM network

- The proximity of the C2C alignment to houses in Hardwick, Coton and Cambourne is inappropriate for fast, automated vehicles that potentially run all hours.

- There are too many right angled turns in C2C (10 in total) for suitability as a metro, or Rapid Transit Route.

- The C2C alignment cuts across the best locations for CAM portals, and the bridges are in the wrong place.

- It doesn't link to potential East-West Rail stations, or enable the metro to proceed to St Neots.

- Crucially, it reduces the ability to make the right decisions on EW rail and CAM later.

(ii) East-West Rail (EWR) with a station at Cambourne

- The business case for C2C needs to be reworked to take the station at Cambourne into consideration. GCP claim the C2C scheme is 'complementary' and that its business case is unlikely to be impacted by EWR. However the LLF considers this approach to lack credibility. Clearly, a major heavy rail infrastructure will take many commuters from Cambourne and surrounding areas, reducing the number who would use C2C.

- How can we know the C2C scheme will be complementary to EWR when we do not yet know where the Cambourne station will be located?

2. There are significant concerns about the transport benefits of the C2C scheme.

(i) It is very expensive – costing at least £200 million (£256 million if renewables are considered).

(ii) The Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) is somewhere between 0.2 and 0.4 – five to ten times less than the minimum typically acceptable for public transport schemes. As a piece of transport infrastructure, it is not fit for purpose.

(iii) The predicted journey times and reliability are only marginally better than could be achieved with an on-road bus priority scheme on existing infrastructure.

(iv) Without the CAM underground network, commuters end up on Grange Road on the outskirts of Cambridge, from where it is a convoluted and lengthy onward journey to destinations such as the Cambridge Biomedical Campus, City Centre and Science Park. These journeys would be better undertaken on alternative routes.

(v) Any time saving though taking an off-road route through the Green Belt west of Cambridge is more than lost by the difficulty of the onward journey from Grange Road.

3. There are very significant impacts on the environment and communities along route

- (i) In Hardwick, 102 houses would potentially be faced by eight continuous lanes of traffic as a result of the felling of hundreds of trees along the route. The four lanes of traffic that constitute the A428 (with lorries thundering past) are above roof height in places. This is an alarming prospect for local residents.
- (ii) Madingley Hill is an area of 'scenic grandeur' - as described in the Guidebook to the American Military Cemetery, which is located, with justification, on the top. National Trust covenants, overlooking the city, will be cut through by the proposed 22-metre-wide tarmac road, and buses will pass, at speed, very close to houses in the rural village of Coton at the base of the hill.
- (iii) On the outskirts of Cambridge, the route would dissect the West Fields, an area of land successfully defended in a High Court judgement in 2008 as highly significant to the setting of the Backs.

Communities along the route strongly support the idea of better public transport along the corridor and there are both interim and longer-term proposals which would meet all the needs of commuters from Cambourne and other new developments, without the damage, and with public support.

I hope you will agree that there are many concerns and questions about the Cambourne to Cambridge scheme that are outstanding. Please use your influence to encourage a rethink and the avoidance of what could be a very costly mistake.

Yours faithfully,

Helen Bradbury
Chair, Cambourne to Cambridge LLF

Appendix 1: List of Attendees to C2C LLF, 2nd June 2020

Helen Bradbury	Chair
Phil Allen	Vice-Chair & District Councillor, Harston & Comberton
Ruth Betson	District Councillor, Cambourne
Dr Shrobona Bhattacharya	District Councillor, Cambourne
Joseph O'Dwyer	Chair, Cambourne Town Council
David Jones	Town Councillor, Cambourne
Steve Jones	Spokesperson, Coalition of 22 Parish Councils
Des O'Brien	Parish Councillor, Bourn
Grenville Chamberlain	District Councillor, Hardwick
Lina Nieto	County Councillor, Hardwick
Tom Bygott	District Councillor, Girton & Dry Drayton
Dr Gabriel Fox	Parish Councillor, Coton
Josh Newman	Chair, Grantchester PC
Jenny Julien	Chair, Haslingfield PC
Rod Cantrill	City Councillor, Newnham
Dr Markus Gehring	City Councillor, Newnham
Cheney-Anne Payne	City Councillor, Castle Ward
Josh Matthews	City Councillor, Newnham
James Littlewood	Cambridge Past Present & Future
Chris Pratten	Save West Fields campaign
Rita Langan	Cranmer Road RA
Charles D'Oyly	North Newnham RA
Ellen Khemilnitski	Gough Way RA
Jean Glasberg	South Newnham RA
Daniel Strauss	Adam's Road RA