

George Lloyd

From: C2Caudit <c2caudit@sharedintelligence.net>
Sent: 15 March 2021 13:55
To: Pooja Gurnani; Sutton, John2
Subject: FW: C2C proposed route through Hardwick - "Save the trees but keep the busway"

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A further representation John.
Pooja – please add to the list.
I have acknowledged it.
Phil.



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Sent: 12 March 2021 11:23
To: C2Caudit <c2caudit@sharedintelligence.net>
[Redacted]

Subject: C2C proposed route through Hardwick - "Save the trees but keep the busway"

Dear Mr Swann

I understand that you have been commissioned to steer the audit of the selection of the preferred route for the Cambourne to Cambridge busway project.

The village of Hardwick is greatly concerned about the potential significant loss of a long belt of trees as a result of the busway being constructed on the current preferred route. The belt of trees runs along the northern edge of the village and among other things screens the A428 dual carriageway which runs parallel to the St Neots Road in Hardwick.

I share that concern but I, and others in the village, can also appreciate the many benefits that the proposed busway can bring and which we would like to have. Can we save the trees but keep the busway?

I attach below a submission I made recently to Hardwick Parish Council and which gives further details. Please can you include this email as a submission for consideration by your audit.

Thanks in advance for considering my email.

Dear Tony [Chairman of Hardwick Parish Council]

I am writing with my personal views regarding the Cambourne to Cambridge busway [the Busway] with particular reference to its impact on Hardwick.

My understanding of the key features of the Busway

The Busway is intended to provide rapid, regular, reliable and safe public bus transport between Cambourne and Cambridge using buses that are clean, environmentally friendly and quiet. The Busway can be a mixture of on road and off road. The Busway incorporates a wide adjoining path that accommodates pedestrians, joggers and cyclists. There already exists a busway from St Ives to Cambridge with these features.

My primary objective

My primary objective is that all the residents of Hardwick should be able to enjoy the benefits of the Busway by having access to the Busway on the periphery of Hardwick and specifically South of the A428. Previous plans have included a bus stop near the junction of Cambridge Road and St Neots Road which would meet my primary objective.

My secondary objectives assuming the Busway runs to the north of Hardwick and south of the A428

That if there is to be a Park & Ride on the route from Cambourne to Cambridge then my preference is for it to be located at Scotland Farm on the basis that this will increase the likelihood of space on the buses being available to Hardwick residents. It is only supposition but I expect there will be some buses that only run between the Park & Ride and Cambridge.

That the wishes of the residents of St Neots Road be acted upon such that any negative impact on them be minimised. In particular I would expect there to be erected a substantial acoustic fence to replace the current fence which currently separates the A428 dual carriageway from St Neots Road. The residents of St Neots Road should have an input on the exact route of the Busway.

That the concerns of other residents of the village be acted upon so that any negative impact of the Busway be minimised. In particular I have in mind here the potential removal of a large number of trees along St Neots Road including several mature oak trees.

Other comments

There are a significant number of vocal objectors to a Busway running on or along St Neots Road. There are those on St Neots who will be directly affected by the Busway in that they will see it and any buses running on it and they may lose their view of the trees.

They are concerned by the uninterrupted 8 lanes of traffic outside their homes. I agree that this would be unacceptable for them and therefore acoustic fencing and landscaping will be necessary if the tree belt is removed and which will I understand be provided. Ironically the A428 was built as a by pass for the houses on St Neots Road about 50(?) years ago when at that time St Neots Road was a main East West artery and without the bypass, which I understand the Parish Council fought for, there would have been very heavy traffic along St Neots Road for many years. I find it strange that some residents of St Neots Road are now apparently complaining about it.

Then there is the wider concern regarding the removal of many trees. I share this concern and would want to see plans to minimise the removal of trees and maximise additional replacement trees and landscaping. Loss of trees can be significantly reduced by an on road Busway on the St Neots Road, or bus lanes on St Neots Road or by moving the Busway to the north of the current belt of trees. No doubt this latter suggestion will be more costly but it does seem possible as do the other suggestions. It does not appear inevitable that we will lose a large number of the trees.

Our climate change group understandably wants the trees to remain but surely reducing car travel and the associated emissions are also worthwhile environmental objectives.

Some residents I understand are concerned about the loss of the numerous lay-bys along the St Neots Road. In my opinion these are no longer needed now that the St Neots Road is no longer a main road. My understanding is that the Busway will build the path for pedestrians and cyclists where the lay-bys currently are and this appears to me to be a much better use for them especially as they will be landscaped. There has been concern as well regarding cycling crossing in front of cars joining the St Neots Road from driveways. However this is not uncommon especially in Cambridge and doesn't appear to be a problem.

Having the Busway run to the north of Hardwick and south of the A428 brings the Busway close to where most people live in Hardwick. An alternative route running to the south of Hardwick was originally considered as an option but discarded in favour of the northern route. However a southern route would meet my primary objective and avoid many of the issues associated with the northern route. There could be a single transport corridor running to the south of Hardwick incorporating the Comberton Greenway. A southern route would provide a public bus service to the south of our village where there is currently none and the northern part of the village could choose between a long walk to the south to the Busway or travel on the Citi 4 along the St Neots Road. I am just pointing to some of the possibilities here with a southern route - there are others.

While on the subject of the Citi 4 many residents claim that it is perfectly adequate for the needs of Hardwick. As it is at its current frequency and when it is not delayed on Madingley Road. However if the Busway goes ahead and avoids Hardwick e.g. by going along the A428 or north of it this will take a large amount of demand for the Citi 4 services which is the only current means of public transport from Cambourne. I would expect this to result in a large reduction in the frequency of the Citi 4 buses in future in those circumstances.

Despite claims by some objections to the Busway proposals are not universal in Hardwick and quite possibly not even along St Neots Road. Our younger residents in particular appear to be more receptive to a Busway focussing on potential long term benefits both to Hardwick residents and to reduction in emissions. A former resident has commented on social media about how pleasant it is to cycle and ride along the St Ives to Cambridge busway.

A slight majority (54%) of respondents to our 2016/17 Village Plan were against a Busway along St Neots Road. A majority but a fairly evenly split opinion in the words of the Village Plan.

Summary

My views are broadly compatible with a succession of resolutions made by the Parish Council and my hope is that the Council can be constructive in getting the benefits of the Busway while minimising some of the real fears and concerns of village residents. I am happy for my views to be circulated to the rest of the Parish Council and if required more widely within the village.

Steve Rose

Yours sincerely

Steve Rose

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