

Written Statement for EIP Matter 7: Transport

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7A Strategic transport issues

i. Are all essential transport schemes/improvements identified in the Plans and is it clear how they will be delivered?

The plan does not identify all essential transport schemes as it fails to address how the increased number of cars resulting from the vast increase in houses will be accommodated. In the area affected by the proposed developments at Bourn Airfield and West Cambourne there will be an estimated 10,000 extra commuter car journeys each day¹. This is in an area that is already struggling from overcapacity of the local road network and which is likely to be further put upon by central government proposals to use the convert the A428 into a dual carriageway for its full length from the A1 to the A14 as part of a Milton Keynes to Cambridge “Expressway”². To further compound this issue, the current works at the junction between the A428 and the A14 are going to reduce the A428 to a single carriageway creating an additional pinch point for the extra traffic expected along this route.

The solution in the Plans for the developments at Bourn Airfield and West Cambourne is to add a segregated busway to Madingley hill. The recently released plans for the spending of the Cambridge City Deal funds has allocated over £90m for adding a segregated busway from Caxton Gibbet to Queens Road in Cambridge, a potential Park & Ride at some point along the A428 and a cycle path³. Whilst this may improve the journey times for those commuters who travel into Cambridge city, it will do nothing for those who work at one of the two major employment sites to the north & south of the city. The deliverability of these schemes is also highly questionable due to the physical constraints of Madingley Hill and Madingley Road. The location of the American Cemetery and large houses in close proximity to the existing road would make it very difficult to widen the road with a separate bus lane whilst the topography of the land surrounding this route would make a new busway an expensive civil engineering project. This combined with the uncertain benefits of such a scheme raise serious doubts as to its return on investment of such a large amount of public funds which seem to have been diverted to try and mitigate the unsustainable transport situation created by proposed development in unsuitable locations.

Most of the schemes put forward appear to have the objective of improving the *current* transport situation caused by recent developments around Cambridge. They will do nothing to alleviate the potential impacts of a plan with such high concentrations of new development in areas with already stretched infrastructure.

ii. Do the Plans adequately reflect the Local Transport Plan (LTP) and the Transport Strategy for Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire (TSCSC)?

The Plans are in complete contradiction to the Local Transport Plan. Specifically, Challenges 2 & 3 of the LTP which are stated as

“Reducing the length of the commute and the need to travel by private car”.

1 <http://ukcensusdata.com/bourn-e05002795>

2 Government Road Investment Strategy, 2014

3 Cambridge News, 7th January 2015

“Making sustainable modes of transport a viable and attractive alternative to the private car”

The LTP recognises that the barriers to addressing Challenge 2 include *“Housing affordability and lack of housing close to where people work”* and *“Often no realistic alternative to the private car”*. The LTP continues by stating what needs to be done to overcome these barriers, the first of which is to *“Work with local planning authorities to bring about new developments in the most sustainable and accessible locations”*

For Challenge 3 the LTP includes barriers such as *“Length of journey”*, *“Lack of public transport, particularly in rural areas and during the evenings”* and *“Lack of ongoing funding to subsidise non-commercially viable bus services”*. The first suggestion in the LTP to address these barriers is *“Work with planning authorities to co-locate housing and services/facilities to reduce the need to travel long distances”*.

SCDC has ignored these directives completely by choosing to place 2 large developments (Bourn Airfield and West Cambourne) a great distance from the main areas of employment (the Science Park to the north and the Biomedical Campus to the south) in an area that has no realistic alternative for commuting other than by private car. These developments are in an area where residents commute on average 10km further than residents in the rest of South Cambridgeshire⁴ and their inclusion is therefore going to do nothing to address the challenge of reducing the length of commuting. 75% of working residents who currently live in the locality of these two developments use their private car to get to work⁵ and with no provision in the Plans to offer a significant alternative it can be assumed that the residents of new developments at Bourn and Cambourne would follow a similar pattern.

SCDC has rejected sites which would help overcome these barriers by being significantly closer to areas of employment in favour of these unsuitable, unsustainable sites.

iii. Does the Transport evidence base, including, comply with paragraphs 54-001-20141010 to 54-011-20141010 of Planning Practice Guidance?

The transport evidence base in the Plans appears to be severely lacking. There is no evidence of current traffic flows in the areas around the proposed developments at Bourn Airfield and West Cambourne. Any *strategic* local plan would have used traffic surveys to assess which parts of the district are already struggling with traffic and sites would then have been chosen that would not exacerbate these problems. Unfortunately this was not the approach taken by SCDC otherwise they would have discovered, as the coalition of Parish Councils has, that the roads between the Bourn and Cambourne area are already heavily oversubscribed by commuter traffic. Any additional developments in this area with its gross lack of employment opportunities will make the situation significantly worse with no clear plan as to how to mitigate this.

There is also no mention of schemes altering the national road network in the area and how these

⁴ Living In Cambourne, Cambridgeshire County Council, 2006

⁵ <http://ukcensusdata.com/bourn-e05002795>

will affect existing traffic flows. This should have been considered when choosing sites for new development as they could alter the volumes and flow of traffic significantly.

iv. Will the Plans encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport?

In order for the plan to have be fully strategic, the council would have needed to consider where the major areas of employment in the local district and then look at current and potential infrastructure to assess the best places to put new houses to best encourage sustainable transport from these developments to the likely sites of work. Unfortunately SCDC failed to do this on a gross scale, rather they asked for developers to come forward with sites on which they wanted to build with no thought as to how residents would get from there to their place of work.

The two significant and expanding areas of employment around Cambridge are the Science Park to the north and the Biomedical Campus to the south of the city. The major developments at Northstowe and Waterbeach will provide housing with reasonable transport links to the northern employment sites thanks to the guided busway already present. Developments with transport links to the southern areas are however woefully lacking.

The Bourn Airfield and West Cambourne developments are a clear example of the lack of strategic approach to the Local Plan. There are no rail links in this area, there is no guided busway. There are currently 4 bus routes that serve the area which all go into the centre of Cambridge rather than to either the Science Park to the north or the Biomedical Campus to the south. The fact that 75% of residents in the area use their cars to get to work (compared to 68% of residents of South Cambridgeshire as a whole)⁶ clearly demonstrates that there is inadequate provision of sustainable transport routes for commuters in this area. The Local Plan hopes to solve this by building a segregated busway for a few hundred metres down Madingley Hill. This will not encourage more bus use as the buses still don't go where the commuters need to go, it will simply help those who want to go into the centre of Cambridge to get there 15 minutes sooner. The rest of the commuters, who will still need to use their cars to get to where they actually work, will have an even worse journey as they are being forced to give priority to the buses along one of the busiest stretches of their route. The consequence of this will be an increase in the “rat runs” through local villages as an ever increasing number of commuters try to find a quicker route to work.

In conclusion, not only does the Local Plan fail to encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport, it actually encourages the use of *unsustainable* modes of transport.

⁶ <http://ukcensusdata.com/bourn-e05002795>