



Stapleford Parish Council

CLERK Belinda Irons

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24th March 2021

Cllr Neil Gough
Chair Greater Cambridge Partnership

Dear Cllr Gough,

Cambridge South East Transport (CSET) Phase 2: Alternative route option independent report and formal request for re-evaluation

In June 2020, the GCP Executive Board made a decision not to carry out further work on the option to re-use the former Haverhill railway alignment through the villages of Great Shelford and Stapleford as part of the CSETS busway, based on a report produced by Mott Macdonald in May 2020 (referred to by Mott Macdonald as the 'Shelford Railway Alignment'). Instead, GCP Board approval was given to take forward a preferred route through the Green Belt. Following this decision, I was given assurances by the former Chair of the GCP, Cllr Roger Hickford, that if new evidence was provided in relation to the re-use of the Shelford Railway Alignment then the GCP would review its decision.

The GCP made it clear to us that they would not carry out any further work relating to the Shelford Railway Alignment. Therefore the Parish Councils of Stapleford and Great Shelford have used their own funds, supported by crowdfunding, to commission an independent report into the re-use of the Shelford Railway Alignment, the report provided by Mott Macdonald and GCP decision-making. Following a tendering exercise, i-Transport were appointed, and they have now provided us with their report. I am attaching this report for your consideration. It highlights that:

- The Shelford Railway Alignment can meet the specifications required by the GCP. It can be fully segregated, compliant with a future Cambridge Autonomous Metro (CAM), and does not require the large-scale demolition that was given as a reason for excluding this route.
- Using the old railway line would take the alignment through the villages, which would increase passenger numbers compared to a route on the edge of the villages. The economic case for the CSETS scheme relies on the community using the new busway. The costs of the CSETS scheme relative to the benefits offers poor value for money, with a benefit-to-cost ratio of less than half that sought by the GCP Board.

- Re-using the former railway would avoid damaging the Green Belt. The exceptional circumstances required to gain planning permission for building in the Green Belt can only be granted if there is not a reasonable alternative.
- There are serious weaknesses in the process used to arrive at the conclusion reached by the GCP, including a lack of assessment transparency, unsubstantiated key decisions and public consultation feedback not properly taken into account.

Considering Cllr Hickford's assurances to me and the new evidence which is provided by i-Transport, I am formally requesting that the GCP Board commits to carry out further work to properly assess the option of re-using the Shelford Railway Alignment. We would be pleased to share the work that has been carried out by i-Transport, as well as our own assessments, to help inform your work. We request that work on the preferred alignment is paused whilst this work takes place.

We are aware that there is no upcoming GCP Board meeting at which we can raise this urgent matter. We trust that you will discuss with the other Board members to determine how to proceed so that the Shelford Railway Alignment can be duly considered.

I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Yours faithfully,



Howard Kettel FRICS
Chair Stapleford Parish Council
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cc

Cllr Nicky Massey
Cllr Ian Bates
Mayor James Palmer
Claire Ruskin
Phil Allmendinger