

17<sup>th</sup> March 2022

**By Email: *Elisa.Meschini@cambridgeshire.gov.uk***

Cllr Elisa Meschini  
Greater Cambridge Partnership  
Mandela House  
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Dear Councillor Meschini

### **CSET Phase 2**

Having read your recent exchange of letters with Anthony Browne, Great Shelford Parish Council (GSPC) wishes to address some of the issues raised that we believe require clarification. We are becoming increasingly concerned that the issue has become polarised along party political lines, which runs the risk of arriving at a decision that does not meet the best interests of residents. We hope that our apolitical position can allow progress to be made in the debate without recourse to other loyalties.

- 1) We disagree with your assessment of the validity of Anthony Browne's consultation. We were extremely grateful to see a simple, coherent survey, which gave clear context and enabled local people to voice their concerns.

Instead, you believe your older consultation from 2018 carries more weight. We believe that this consultation was flawed, not only because of the "vote-splitting" which has often been referred to, but in its methodology. The 1,684 people who replied to the question on the three strategies (i.e. routes) were given five possible boxes to tick for each strategy, from "strongly support" to "strongly oppose". It wasn't like electing an MP, where you tick one box, and between them the 1,684 respondents ticked 4,893 boxes. It is not obvious how you would take a decision based on these figures; strategy 1, for example, has the highest number in "strongly support" and also the highest number in "strongly oppose".

- 2) Since the 2018 consultation there have been several material changes in circumstances including:
  - a) the cancellation of the Cambridge Autonomous Metro (CAM);
  - b) the planned expansion of the Cambridge Biomedical Campus to the south-east; and
  - c) the decision on the retirement village on Hinton Way in Stapleford.

Whatever strengths and weaknesses it may have had at the time, the 2018 consultation is no longer valid as a basis for decision. We cannot understand how the current proposals can be taken forward when so many material considerations have changed in the intervening period.

- 3) You seem to have confused two different proposals in your response, conflating the possible reopening of the Haverhill line with the "railway route", (or Shelford Rail Alignment), that was explored extensively by i-Transport and Mott MacDonald.

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As far as we are aware, no-one is promoting the Shelford Rail Alignment scheme at the moment, and that was neither Anthony Browne's, Better Ways than Busways nor GSPC's suggestion.

As we understand it, the longer-term rail re-opening option need not result in any demolition of the station – the Haverhill line ran on the existing Liverpool St line tracks until it was closed in 1967 to a point south of the then signal box at the Hinton Way crossing. Its reopening would of course result in an increase in the current 23 mins per hour downtime of the level crossing barriers in Great Shelford and for that reason, GSPC is advocating placing the Liverpool St line in a tunnel or a trench which would allow the village's level crossings to be removed, eliminating a significant bottleneck for current traffic flows and future transport projects.

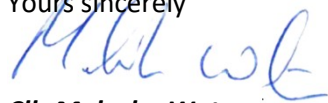
- 4) You correctly point out the already lengthy waiting times at level crossings in Great Shelford and point out that a railway from Haverhill to Cambridge (if not tunnelled) would negatively impact the level crossings on Granham's Road and Hinton Way. But the current CSET proposal suggest building another gated crossing across the same roads a few 100 yards further up the hills, creating a second stopping point and further restricting the flow of traffic. Therefore, this is not a point of differentiation between the two proposals; the additional stoppage time is an issue that applies just as importantly on the route you support. GSPC is opposed to any transport plan that increases the traffic issues on Hinton Way and Granham's Road and instead we are actively looking for solutions to alleviate this issue.
- 5) You believe that the Inspector provided for a route for the CSET busway when approving the retirement village. In his report, the inspector Mr Clark said (para 63) *"the Busway scheme is at a very early stage of preparation. A Transport and Works Act Order is some years away ... a different alignment for the Busway, avoiding the part of the site to be developed for a retirement care village can be envisaged."* He did consider a possible 15 metre wide route at para 61, but that would clearly now be within the more sensitive Gog Magog Chalk Hills LCA, since any alignment would be above the 25m contour.

In summary, we strongly believe we are speaking on behalf of our residents in asking GCP to examine seriously the alignment along or beside the A1307 as it offers a simpler, cheaper, lower impact option than the current proposals. The A1307 route option was examined in detail before the requirement for the busway to be CAM compatible was imposed and we urge you to readopt this plan, with suitable revisions to take into account any recent relevant changes in circumstances. We believe it is important that GCP demonstrates the organisational agility to consider this in light of the changing context we outlined in item 2, above. The voting public are intelligent enough to appreciate that when circumstances change, a business or project plan should be reviewed.

Your justification for not reviewing the situation is, as illustrated by the contents of this letter, simply not sound, and allowing this to become a party-political issue is not in the interests of the residents of our Parish nor of the wider South Cambridgeshire community.

GSPC hopes that this letter will help you understand the issues more clearly. Thank you.

Yours sincerely



**Cllr Malcolm Watson**

Chairman

cc. Anthony Browne MP  
Mayor Nik Johnson  
Better Ways than Busways Campaign Group