

# Controversial off-road C2C busway plans move forward

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A £160million off-road Cambourne to Cambridge busway will be progressed despite accusations that it is "expensive and unnecessary".

The Greater Cambridge Partnership's executive board has agreed to request formally that Cambridgeshire County Council approves submission of a Transport and Works Order.

But objectors say the decision has been made without the "full facts on the impacts of the scheme on wildlife and the landscape" being known.

Meanwhile, questions have also been raised over the cost of the scheme and whether the GCP will have the funds to pay for it, with the GCP explaining that £40m of the project's overall cost will come from

**“It is within your power to stop the irreversible damage to a precious landscape and village by keeping the bus on Madingley Road**

Carolyn Postgate  
Resident

Section 106 developer contributions.

Among 10 questions put to the committee, resident Gabriel Fox asked: "Residents all along the route have always supported the overall objective of better bus journeys, but have long and consistently argued for a sensitive, respectful and proportionate scheme – sensitive to our local environment, respectful of taxpayers' money and proportionate to the problem at hand."

But he said there was "incontrovertible evidence" that the congestion that triggered this project has "gone away and is not returning" adding that: "Even with the additional housing planned, it is clearly not going to come back to anything like the same degree."

And he called on the GCP to "do right" by the local community and "discontinue an expensive and unnecessary off-road route" along the Coton corridor and focus instead on the improvements on Madingley Road.

This was disputed by the GCP's



Residents Gabriel Fox and Helen Bradbury at the West Fields in Coton, through which the busway is due to run

Picture: Keith Heppell

transport director Peter Blake, who said the scheme is not just intended to address current issues but upon housing and employment growth.

He said: "Traffic levels continue to return to normal, with cars returning faster than other modes."

The meeting also heard that a petition from Cambridge Past, Present & Future (PPF), Coton Parish Council, Coton Busway Action Group, Coton Orchard, Coton Loves Pollinators, Hardwick Parish Council and Save the West Fields has been signed more than 900 times. It calls on the GCP to rethink its plans for the busway through the countryside, which the petitioners say will cause "unnecessary destruction to an important green corridor and historic orchard".

The preferred route the GCP has agreed to progress includes routing

buses on an existing section of St Neots Road in Hardwick between Cambridge Road and Long Road in a change to the previously approved route, which left residents facing eight lanes of uninterrupted traffic outside their homes.

Carolyn Postgate told the board: "You have listened to the residents of Hardwick and decided that an on-road option is viable on St Neots' Road. It is within your power to stop the destruction of productive arable farmland on Madingley Hill and the devastation of irreplaceable wildlife in Coton Orchard."

"It is within your power to stop the irreversible damage to a precious landscape and village by keeping the bus on Madingley Road."

Cllr Helene Leeming, who represents Cambourne on South Cambridgeshire District Council,

said that the town desperately needs better access to the city.

She said: "And while the pandemic has temporarily reduced traffic levels, they are beginning to increase again and this is without the additional growth in Cambourne and at Bourn Airfield. In Cambourne, we have a relatively young, largely working class population, requiring better access to the city for employment, leisure, health facilities and education, particularly for sixth forms. Currently, we have no safe cycling routes into Cambridge and Cambourne currently has a population of 12,000 people, which will rise significantly with the development of West Cambourne."

Concluding before the proposal went to a vote, chair and county council deputy leader, Labour's Cllr Elisa Meschini said in reference to Cambourne: "Those people have absolutely zero ways to sustainably commute into Cambridge – and quite a lot of them do and quite a lot of them desperately want to."

She added that having already conducted three consultations and with a fourth on the way under the Transport and Works Order: "We do need to get on."

The order will now be put to the highways authority, the county council, for approval for submission to the government.

The land now and, right, how it could look once the busway is built

