
WESTERN ORBITAL ROUTE Consultation 2016

Representations on behalf of St. Johns College,
Cambridge

CAPL239328/A6/GH/RW

1. Western Orbital Consultation Document

Introduction

- 1.1. Savills Planning Team in Cambridge is instructed by St John's College, Cambridge to make the necessary and relevant representations to the current consultation on the Western Orbital Study Proposals. The current options for such a route emanate from a brief whose key aim is as follows:

“The interception of car trips from the south/south west of Cambridge into key destinations in the City, including consideration of the potential linkages with orbital capacity including public transport priority between Cambridge North West (Maddingley Road) and Cambridge Biomedical Campus (Hauxton Road/Trumpington Park and Ride).

In addition, the Study includes an initial assessment of the potential usage of options for a new station at Addenbrookes to serve the Cambridge Biomedical Campus and housing development in the south of the City (Trumpington).

The outcomes of this study should also be compatible with the schemes emerging from the A428 Cambourne to Cambridge transport proposals...”

- 1.2. Having regard to the above, the consultation work seeks the comments on the Study that has been issued by the County Council which identifies and assess options for improved transport, walking and cycling facilities for a Western Orbital route connecting to the new business and residential developments in the north west and south of the City, as well as intercepting car trips from radial routes from the southwest.
- 1.3. Whilst it is acknowledged that such a study needs to be treated as a separate element of work in order to define the most appropriate outcome for the area, it is important that this study and its conclusions must link into other schemes within the City Deal programme - in particular, the degree of integration with the A428 Corridor Study.(Cambourne to Cambridge – better bus journeys). We would confirm that St John's College, Cambridge made representations to the A428 Cambourne to Cambridge Study before Christmas 2015 which supported an alternative option which put forward a new route south of the West Cambridge site and linking into Grange Road.

Background

- 1.4. It is the case that there are current major problems and challenges on the highway network in the local area around Cambridge. Whilst there are variable delays and congestion along each of the main radial routes (A603, A10 and M11), cumulatively, they add up to a position whereby unless anything is done, there will be serious detrimental impact on traffic flow at peak times. This could have the effect of extending the peak period with resultant adverse impact on the local economy.

- 1.5. Work undertaken in the context of the Study for the Western Orbital Route has identified the key aspects of the highway network performance in the area being as follows:
- Significant journey time variability along radial routes in the morning peak, both east and west of the M11 particularly at
 - A1309, Trumpington Road
 - A10, Foxton level crossing
 - A603, Barton Road/Grange Road/Granchester Street
 - M11. Barton Road Junction
 - Congestion on the M11, particular at the off slips southbound at junction 11 and northbound at junction 13 in the morning peak.
 - Low traffic speeds in the morning peak, particularly approaching/at junctions on the M11; and,
 - Average morning peak delays on the M11 slip roads of 1.5 – 2 minutes northbound, and 1.5 minutes southbound; on the A603 eastbound delays of approximately 13 minutes; and on the A10 eastbound delays of approximately 16 minutes in excess of free flowing conditions.
- 1.6. The Council's modelling forecast on the back of these existing key aspects has analysed the main destinations for trips made by all modes as a consequence of planned developments. Such planned developments include those within the current emerging development plans of both Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire. It is important to acknowledge that the Examination into both plans has already heard from parties who consider that both housing and employment targets fall short of what is required and, consequently, other sites are being put forward for development in such a context. Such sites include areas of land currently shown within the Cambridge Green Belt and located between the edge of the City and the M11 south of Madingley Road and north of Barton Road. In the circumstances where such developments remain the subject of consideration by local planning inspectors, it is important that any decisions taken on various options for the Western Orbital Route are 'future proofed' to ensure that such strategic areas of land are looked at comprehensively as part of the impact on the highway network.
- 1.7. St John's College land interests in the context of the Western Orbital consultation lie to the south of the Coton footpath and south of the West Cambridge site. Consequently, it is the case that options for the Western Orbital route may directly relate to the College's land holdings in that area and it would be important for the relevant authorities to be in contact with the College in the event that any selected option moves forward which affects such interests. This would be particularly relevant to that option which considers a new off line bus link on the eastern side of the M11.
- 1.8. The need for a new bus link is set against a background of needing to address the increased demand through an enhanced transport network. Road safety data has been assessed and public transport provision considered as part of a case for a new Western Orbital route. With an acknowledgement that public transport provision is limited when considering other improvements across the City from further afield, it remains important to secure improved networks which seek to remove people from the private motor car.

- 1.9. Regarding pedestrian and cyclist facilities , it is the case that they are of variable quality and coverage. In terms of their approach to the M11, both the A10 and the A603 have no cycle lanes provided on the main carriageway although there are some shared pavements at the side of the road.
- 1.10. Concerning car usage, it is the case that South Cambridgeshire as the surrounding rural District has a high level of car ownership (89%) compared to City residents of 66%, which is reflective of the high proportion of people cycling to work.
- 1.11. It is as a result of these characteristics and importantly the forecasts for new housing and employment growth that makes the case for the Western Orbital option. With ongoing developments at the Biomedical Campus to reach a workforce of around 30,000 and with North West (3000 homes), Darwin Green (2000 homes), Glebe Farm and Clay Farm (2900 homes) it is the case that the networks will face further constraints in the meantime. As stated earlier in this submission, these above figures only reflect the amount of committed development and do not account for any new sites that may come forward in the context of ongoing submissions at the Local Plan Examination.
- 1.12. Even with just the committed development, the County's modelling envisages significant growth of 88% of trips made in the study area by the end of the plan period (2031). Such an increase will undoubtedly have a major impact on traffic levels in terms of exacerbating the high levels of congestion and lengthening journey time.
- 1.13. From an understanding of the factors involved in the continuing planned expansion of the City to the South and the West, as well as a recognition of new sites being promoted at the Examination, St John College supports the principle of a new Western Orbital route.

Proposals for a new bus link on or near the M11

- 1.14. On the basis of trying to secure a new bus route from the west to the south, and vice versa the Study looks at a new bus link between Junctions 11 and 13 of the M11 – such a route could be on the M11 or on the land to the west of the M11 or to the east of the M11. Any of these routes could be combined with the various Park and Ride and cycling improvements suggested in options A, B , C and D.
- 1.15. In assessing the benefits of each of the options for a new bus route it seems logical to provide a route which is dedicated bus only and which does not interfere with existing general traffic. To simply place buses on the M11 where congestion at peak time is already experienced between junctions 11 and 13 is inappropriate - the creation of a new dedicated route to address traffic problems now and in the future must be the way forward if we are to avoid adding to existing problems on the motorway. Indeed in circumstances where we know that the M11 will encounter capacity issues in 2031 having factored in traffic growth and committed and planned new developments, it makes no sense to use the motorway as the bus route.

- 1.16. In the context of the above where the principle of a Western Orbital is agreed and the view that the M11 motorway should not be the bus route, it is a question of which side of the M11 should a new route take. In assessing this choice, it is important to acknowledge that any route on the east side of the M11 has the opportunity to pick up the Madingley Road park and ride site and the West Cambridge site as well as the linkages into North West Cambridge and the Darwin Green developments. Additionally, the presence of College land ownerships including St Johns College along such an eastern route would help to facilitate the new bus route.
- 1.17. Such a dedicated route on the eastern side of the M11 would also have the opportunity to tie in with the Cambourne to Cambridge bus route and to which the College made submissions. Our proposed route for the Cambourne to Cambridge bus route is to run through the West Cambridge site off Madingley Road and then enter the land just to the south of the West Cambridge site and south of the Coton footpath.
- 1.18. Such a route would be purely for buses. If part of the route can be used for both a Cambridge to Cambourne route as well as a Western Orbital Route then clearly there are significant savings to be made. On the basis that the alignment to the Western Orbital route will not be on the M11, then it is our view that a route on the eastern side of the M11 is more appropriate.
- 1.19. This is because it picks up existing employment areas at West Cambridge on its route and has the ability then to link into any park and ride/cycle opportunities at junctions elsewhere. To place a new route on the western side of the M11 risks the inability to pick up or drop off people going or coming to or from work. Additionally, as shown in the previous consultation Cambourne to Cambridge, there are significant costs of bridging the M11. It is therefore the view of St John's College, Cambridge that the new bus route linked to the Western Orbital route should be based on a dedicated bus route on the eastern side of the M11. Such a bus route should be paralleled with a pedestrian/cycleway alongside similar to the guided bus route and which provides a safe, high quality route long its length.

Consideration of Western Orbital A – D Options

- 1.20. The 4 options put forward within this consultation all seek to exploit the opportunity of interrupting traffic before it gets into Cambridge and making it attractive for people to park their cars and then continue their journey by either bike or bus. Option A proposes a new park and ride facility at Junction 11 (Trumpington) – the current park and ride is approaching capacity and it is the case that additional spaces will be needed at or near this site in the near future. This new park and ride facility is featured in all the other options and clearly is a major component part of the Western Orbital project.
- 1.21. Option B, C and D also contain sub options for park and ride/park and cycle at junction 12 with or without cycle improvements along to the Barton Road.

- 1.22. From the College's perspective, it remains the case that measures that are introduced which address the inevitable growth that Cambridge is going to face, must be supported. To deny the ongoing development pressures which continue to make Cambridge the place where people want to live, work and visit is unrealistic. Coping with new development and having a highways strategy to mitigate its impact is essential and to that end we support approaches which capture movements on the edges of the City and either persuade or force people onto other modes of traffic other than private motor car. With Barton Road being one of the few feeder roads without a park and ride facility, it is inevitable that it now becomes a focus for attention in the context of this study.
- 1.23. Option D in the view of the College provides the most appropriate strategy in the light of the opportunity afforded by a facility at Junction 12. This option includes the park and ride facility at Junction 11 (Trumpington) as well as a new park and ride and park and cycle facility alongside cycle improvements along Barton Road. It is noted that no bus improvements are suggested along Barton Road. Such additional park and ride/cycling facilities would be welcomed by both staff and academics of the College.
- 1.24. This option creates a new park and ride site which is linked across the M11 with a new busway at Trumpington. The new park and ride site aims to remove a significant proportion of the traffic from Junction 11 of the M11 and the A10 which currently has to cross the M11 to use the existing park and ride site which means removing those vehicles from the road before they reach the junction. Regarding the proposed facility at Barton Road, this enables people to park cars and cycle the remaining distance, on the basis that this location is closer to their destination compared to other park and ride sites. In any new scheme for Barton Road, we would assume that the current slip road junction onto the Coton Road from the M11 is the subject of reworking since the current visibility arrangement is considered dangerous.

Conclusion

- 1.25. Option D provides the most sensible and logical proposals to address traffic issues in the context of a proposed new Western Orbital route. It provides for new park and ride and cycling facilities at the Barton Road junction and additional park and ride facilities at the A10 junction. With a dedicated bus route on the eastern side of the M11 to link these sites and then into the route to the north connecting North West Cambridge to Darwin Green and northwards to Histon Road, this creates the potential for a new bus link around the large employment and residential sites north, west and south Cambridge
- 1.26. A plan showing an indicative route is enclosed at **Appendix A** which shows connections both to the north and to the south with a route shown through West Cambridge, which potentially could connect into the Cambourne – Cambridge bus route which was the subject of consultation earlier this year, and to which the College has already made representations.
- 1.27. St John's College, Cambridge therefore supports Option D within the Western Orbital Study together with a new bus route off line on the eastern side of the M11.



Appendices



Appendix A Indicative Route Plan
