

Statement on behalf of Bourn Parish Council in response to the Inspector's Matters and Issues for the Site-Specific Hearing on the proposed New Village at Bourn Airfield

1. This statement is submitted by Bourn Parish Council on behalf of the Coalition of Parish Councils. The Coalition was established in 2014 to voice the concerns of A428 corridor parish councils, on strategic transport and planning issues, affecting our communities. The Coalition of Parish Councils has 21 members¹, representing a population of over 25,000 people
2. In response to the Inspector's request to avoid duplication, we have talked to other parties including StopBAD, and agreed that we will focus on the Inspector's General Policy questions (v) on Ribbon Development and (vi) on Transport Infrastructure. We will also respond briefly to the Inspector's AAP questions (vi) to (viii).
3. In order to address the Inspector's question on Transport Infrastructure, we:
 - updated parts of the traffic survey, which we undertook in late 2014 for Matter 7A (Representations 59165 and 59159);
 - undertook a new survey in Cambourne on where people work and how they get there;
 - reviewed various surveys undertaken by other organisations since the Consultation on the Modified Local Plan (January 2016).
4. We would like to point out that it is difficult for us to respond as fully as we would have liked to Question (vi). This is because we remain in the dark about the data, methodologies and assumptions used in the transport models underlying the Local Plan. The Councils have failed to fulfill the Inspector's request to work with other Matter 7A parties to identify areas of common and uncommon ground. The Councils arbitrarily terminated the process when the Inspector suspended the EIP in May 2015.
5. This document should be read together with our previous submissions:
 - **Local Plan** - Statement by Bourn Parish Council on behalf of the Coalition of Parish Councils on MATTER 7A/16748 (Representations 59165 and 59159), January 2015.
 - **Modified Local Plan** – Statement by Bourn Parish Council on behalf of the Coalition of Parish Councils for the consultation on the Modified Local Plan, January 2016.
6. In this document we will use the phrase 'Cambridge Sub-region' to refer to the City of Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire.

¹ *Current members of the Coalition of Parish Councils: Arrington, Barton, * Bourn, Boxworth, Caldecote, Cambourne, Caxton, Connington, Coton, * Croxton, Dry Drayton, Elsworth, Eltisley, Eversdens, Grantchester, * Hardwick, Kingston, Knapwell, Longstowe, Madingley, Toft. (* indicates Associate Member).*

Question v – Ribbon Development

Would the new village result in an over intensification of relatively closely knit settlements south of the A428 creating a form of ribbon development which would be uncharacteristic of this part of South Cambridgeshire?

7. It had been recognised for over 25 years that building housing on Bourn Airfield would result in ribbon development. In 1992, Planning Inspectors rejected Bourn Airfield as a site for major 3,000 home development, because:

'In the case of Bourn Airfield there would be appear to be almost a continuous ribbon of development from the Broadway eastward along the side of the A45 (now A428) to the Hardwick turn on the A1303 - a distance of 3 miles.'²

8. The Planning Inspectors also noted that the housing development at Bourn Airfield:

would be very close to the settlement of Highfields Caldecote.... (and).... would produce a tight and development, which when considered in the context of the existing rural character of the area... would appear too cramped and urban in form for this rural area.

9. Today, the case against housing developing Bourn Airfield on grounds of coalescence and ribbon development is even more compelling. Since 1992:

- Cambourne, with 4,250 houses, has been built immediately to the west of Bourn Airfield;
- West Cambourne, with an additional 2,350 houses, contiguous with Cambourne, has recently received planning permission; and
- Highfield Caldecote has seen significant housing developments, with housing edging ever-closer to the A428 and Hardwick.

10. The 'new village' of Bourn Airfield would unquestionably result in the over intensification of the settlements to the south of the A428 between Hardwick and the A1198 Caxton Gibbet roundabout. **If Bourn Airfield is developed, it will result in a ribbon development 5 miles long (from Caxton Gibbett to Hardwick) and 1 mile deep on land that that up until 25-30 years ago was almost exclusively green fields.**

11. Bourn Airfield development would lead to the coalescence of villages and a significant loss of rural character. The 'new village' would merge with Caldecote and Cambourne and we would have suburban-style ribbon development – an urban swathe of 12,200 houses. In effect, we would have a dormitory town by stealth. This would not only be uncharacteristic of this part of South Cambridgeshire District, but any other part of this district and probably any other district elsewhere in the country.

12. Bourn Airfield is currently a very important green space which provides a valuable separation of 1.25 miles between two clusters of villages – Greater Cambourne and Caldecote Highfields and Hardwick.

13. If Bourn Airfield were to go ahead, it would create an urban sprawl with a population of nearly 32,000 (see Table 1) but without an identifiable or easily accessible 'town' centre. It would,

² See South Cambridgeshire District Council, Country Planning Act 1990, Refusal of Planning Permission, Form 5, REF.S/0144/94/0. See paragraph 12.4.1 of the 1992 Inspectors Report

in our opinion, destroy the rural character of the area, which has been retained well despite the building of Cambourne.

14. If Bourn Airfield goes ahead we would have what The Royal Town Planning Institute in its 2016 'Location of Development Report' calls a **linear pattern of strip development**,which, as a model of development, .. (has) been variously associated with increased infrastructure costs, transportation costs, congestion, pollution and loss of natural land, and with reduced public health and accessibility'.

Table 1. Likely population of the Ribbon Development if Bourn Airfield goes ahead.

Settlement or village	Population
Cambourne	11,390
Cambourne West	6,305
Bourn Airfield	9,380
Caldecote	1,737
Hardwick	2,670
Total	31,480

15. The Local Plan pays lip service to the avoidance of coalescence but, in our view, there is insufficient space around the proposed Bourn Airfield development to ensure that villages will be able to maintain their individual identities.

16. Much had been said about the purposes of the Green Belt during the course of this Local Plan examination - to our knowledge all of the references were designed to protect the fringes of Cambridge against development. The Green Belt is designed to prevent unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas; prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another; safeguard the countryside from encroachment and preserve the setting and special character of historic towns. Surely these protections should be applied with an even hand? Development on Bourn Airfield will result in an urban sprawl, merge neighbouring communities into one another and encroach on the countryside and the special setting and character of historic villages.

17. Figure 1, below, shows the existing and proposed settlements to the south of the A428: together West Cambourne (1), Bourn Airfield (2), Caldecote (3) and Hardwick (4). Cambourne the built up area between (1) and (2). Figure 2 shows the boundaries of the urban area that would result if Bourn Airfield goes ahead.



Figure 1: Bourn Airfield with West Cambourne and existing settlements



Figure 2: If Bourn Airfield goes ahead – urban sprawl in a rural setting (StopBAD image)

Question vi - Off-site transport infrastructure

The policy and reasoned justification refer to the need for extensive off-site transport infrastructure provision in order to mitigate the transport impacts associated with creation of the new village, along with the Cambourne West development which has been granted planning permission. Bearing in mind the requirements of paragraph 177 of the National Planning Policy Framework, is there a reasonable prospect that the provision of such infrastructure, and the services and facilities referred to in the policy and justification, could be achieved in a timely fashion, particularly if the proposed modification to remove any phasing of development (PM/SC/3/I) is accepted, whilst not putting at risk the overall viability of the development?

18. The Modified Local Plan states that the Bourn Airfield will offer great opportunities for sustainable transport, including:

- an improved busway from Cambourne to Cambridge, financed largely by the Greater Cambridge City Deal, which would also serve Bourn Airfield and include stretches of segregated busway and bus priority measures on existing roads;
- measures to promote cycling and walking within the development and to neighbouring with a cycle link to West Cambridge (7 miles away);
- highway improvements to mitigate traffic impacts on surrounding villages and roads

19. The City Deal proposals for the improved busway are still in the early stages of planning. There is considerable opposition to the busway proposals that have been proposed, including by the MPs for Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire, who have called for the busway plans to be reviewed.

20. The City Deal scheme would involve construction of stretches of segregated busway and a new bridge over the M11. If there are no significant delays in planning or construction, it might possibly be operational within 5-6 years, but this is really a question for the City Deal Board. Other measures to promote cycling and walking, and local highway improvements could probably be achieved in the same time frame.

21. Since the earliest that key transport infrastructure identified could be delivered is in line with the development phasing envisaged for Bourn Airfield in the Local Plan (no houses to be built before 2022 and only 1,700 houses by 2031), **we would recommend that the proposed modification (PM/SC/3/I), which would allow an earlier start to housing construction, should be rejected.**

22. Key Objective 6 of the Local Plan aims to “*maximise potential for journeys to be undertaken by sustainable modes of transport, including walking, cycling, bus and trains*”. Although an improved busway would bring some benefits, it will do little to make Bourn Airfield sustainable. This is because Bourn Airfield is located too far away from where people work and the majority of people will still have to commute by car.

23. **The proposed busway would be of use only to the small number of people working in the centre of Cambridge. It would be of little use to the majority of residents who will commute to work in the science and research parks north and south of Cambridge, or at other places in the district and beyond.** The City Deal’s proposals for a Western Orbital route linking the busway to the Science Park in the north and Addenbrooke’s Hospital in the south is at an even earlier stage of planning than the Cambourne to Cambridge busway.

24. In the remainder of this section, we will outline our concerns about the viability of the Councils’ proposal to develop Bourn Airfield, using information from our recent traffic and journey to work surveys.

24. **A segregated busway will not make the new settlements sustainable because the majority of commuters will still travel to work by car.** Recent surveys in Cambourne (a good proxy for future West Cambourne and Bourn Airfield populations) indicate that:

- 3,100 cars leave Cambourne each morning between 0715 and 0915³ ⁴, 2100 of which head east on the A428 or Old St Neot's Road. Because of congestion on the A1303 (Madingley Hill), many of these cars then travel south on small rural roads through villages to the M11 at Barton eventually to reach the Biomedical Cluster south of Cambridge. Approximately 90% of vehicles leaving Cambourne were SOV (single occupancy vehicles) and 10% are double occupancy (DOV).
- 88% of commuters from Cambourne use their cars to get to work, while at most 12% travel by bus⁵.
- 23.3% of commuters from Cambourne travel to work in Central Cambridge (see Table 2), some of whom might possibly be encouraged in future to travel by bus. Another 22.9% work elsewhere in Cambridge (including the Science Park and Addenbrooke's Biomedical Park, which would involve changing buses at least once and slower overall journey times than going by car.
- 27.8 % of commuters from Cambourne work in villages across South Cambridgeshire (see Table 2), often 10-20 miles away from their homes. For these commuters, travelling to work by public transport bus is not an option. It would mean changing buses in Cambridge and much slower overall journey times than going by car. In many cases, the villages where people work have infrequent bus services, or no buses at all.
- 26.0% of Cambourne commuters work outside the Cambridge Sub-Region, in places such as Huntingdon, St Neots, Bedford, Royston and London (which accounts for 5.3% of Cambourne commuters). (Table 2). Again, for these commuters, travelling to work by public transport bus is not an option

25. **In conclusion, for over 75% of commuters from Cambourne, travelling by bus is currently not an option. In future, even if the busway and western orbital were built, over two-thirds of commuters would go by car because buses do not go to the spatially dispersed places people work.**

³ Coalition of Parish Councils. *Update on 2014 traffic survey*. March 2017. The survey was carried out in December 2016.

⁴ At the time of the survey, in December 2016, 95% of the houses in Cambourne had been built. Once all the houses are built the number of cars leaving the settlement is likely to rise to 3,280.

⁵ Preliminary survey results conducted for the Cambourne Parish Plan, which is to be published in March 2017. Other studies indicate that over 90% of Cambourne commuters travel to work by car.

Table 2: Where commuters from Cambourne work⁶

Place of work	% commuters
Central Cambridge	23.3
Other parts of Cambridge	22.9
Villages in South Cambridgeshire	27.8
Outside the sub-region	26.0
Total	100.0

26. We have used the data from these recent surveys to estimate the likely impact of the development of Bourn Airfield on car and bus use for different assumptions about the modal shift from car to bus. These are shown in Tables 2 to 4.

27. In Table 2, we estimate the number of (i) 'cars' (cars/vans/motorbikes) and (ii) buses, which would leave Cambourne, Cambourne West and Bourn Airfield in the two hour morning rush period, once these developments have been completed. Cambourne 2017 data are used as the baseline and estimates for West Cambourne and Bourn Airfield are calculated based on the number of houses planned and the forecast populations of these settlements. It is assumed that 88% of people travel by car and 12% by bus, as is currently the case.

27. Our estimates show that once Cambourne, West Cambourne and Bourn Airfield are completed:

- the number of cars leaving the area in the morning rush will more than double from 3,280 in Cambourne in 2017 to 7,770 (+137%) for the three 'villages'. The number of buses required would increase from 10 to 24;
- Bourn Airfield will result in an additional 2,695 cars leaving the area in the morning rush period (53% more than Cambourne plus Cambourne West) and will require an additional 8 buses.

28. One of the arguments used by the Councils and the City Deal to justify the proposed busway is that an improved service will result in a significant modal shift from car to bus. In our view, a substantial shift to bus use is unlikely because:

- most people in Cambourne work in places which it is difficult to reach by bus (as noted earlier); and
- evidence from elsewhere in the UK and Europe indicates that this rarely happens.

The St Ives-Cambridge busway is often touted as a success story but it is disappointing to note that no independent evaluation of the project has been undertaken. There is little evidence in the public domain to justify claims on numbers of passengers or cost effectiveness.

29. Tables 4 and 5 estimate the number of cars and buses leaving the area under different assumptions of modal shift. We compare the baseline scenario (12% of commuters travel by bus) with increasing degrees of modal shift (18%, 24% and 30% of commuters travelling by

⁶ Coalition of Parish Councils. *Report of a Journey to Work Survey in Cambourne in February 2017*. To be published in March 2017. The data in Table 1 are preliminary and may change slightly.

bus). Table 4 presents evidence for Cambourne, Cambourne West and Bourn Airfield; Table 5 for Bourn Airfield alone.

30. It can be seen from these tables that even under the most ambitious assumption (an increase from 12% to 30% of commuters traveling by bus):

- Cambourne, Cambourne West and Bourn Airfield
The number of commuters travelling by car would only fall from 8,857 to 6,806 (-23%). This figure is more than double the current number of cars leaving Cambourne in the morning rush, The number of buses required would more than double from 24 to 59. This is equivalent to a full bus leaving the area every 2 minutes during the morning rush.
- Bourn Airfield
The number of commuters travelling by car would only fall from 2,965 to 2,361 (-21%), with the number of buses required more than doubling from 8 to 20, which is equivalent to a full bus leaving the ‘village’ every 6 minutes during the morning rush.

31. **In conclusion, this analysis clearly shows, that even under the most ambitious assumption about modal shift from car to bus (30% commuters go by bus), 2,361 cars would leave the proposed Bourn Airfield development in the morning rush (equivalent to 1,180 per hour).**

32. It is hard to see, given current levels of congestion in the transport network (e.g., on Madingley Hill, at Barton and at Caxton Gibbett) how the extra rush hour car journeys generated by West Cambourne can be accommodated, let alone the additional 2,300 to 2,950 that would result from a Bourn Airfield development. Many of these cars would be forced to ‘rat run’ through local villages on country lanes, which are already carrying volumes of traffic and weights never intended for such roads, making life intolerable for local people.

Table 3: Estimate of the number of cars⁷ and buses leaving Cambourne, Cambourne West and Bourn Airfield

	Cambourne	Cambourne West	Bourn Airfield	Total
Houses	4,250	2,350	3,500	10,100
Population	11,500	6,360	9,470	27,330
Cars leaving in the 2-hour morning rush period	3,280	1,804	2,695	7,779
No. of people commuting by car*	3,608	1,984	3,265	8,857
No. of people commuting by bus**	492	271	404	1,167
Total no. of commuters	4,100	2,255	3,369	9,724
No. of buses needed in the 2 hour morning rush period***	10	6	8	24
Assumptions				
*	90% SOV and 10% DOV			
**	88% of people commute by car and 12% by bus.			
***	Assumes buses travel with 50 passengers.			

⁷ Cars, vans and motorbikes.

Table 4: Estimate of the number of cars⁸ and buses leaving Cambourne, Cambourne West and Bourn Airfield under different assumptions on modal shift



Percentage of commuters travelling by bus from Cambourne, Cambourne West and Bourn Airfield	12	18	24	30
	Increasing modal shift 			
Cars leaving in the 2-hour morning rush period	7,779	7,248	6,718	6,187
No. of people commuting by car	8,557	7,974	7,390	6,806
No. of people commuting by bus	1,167	1,750	2,334	2,918
Total No of commuters	9,724	9,724	9,724	9,724
No. of buses required in the 2-hour morning rush period	23-24	35-36	46-47	58-59

Table 5: Estimate of the number of cars⁹ and buses leaving Bourn Airfield under different assumptions on modal shift

Percentage of commuters travelling by bus from Bourn Airfield	12	18	24	30
	Increasing modal shift 			
Cars leaving in the 2-hour morning rush period	2,695	2,511	2,327	2,142
No. of people commuting by car*	2,965	2,763	2,563	2,361
No. of people commuting by bus**	404	606	806	1,008
Total No of commuters	3,369	3,369	3,369	3,369
No. of buses required in the 2-hour morning rush period***	8	12	16	20

33. **The busway plans are at an early stage and the case is not proven.** Although a first tranche of City-Deal finance has been secured, the busway project has yet to be agreed. There is disagreement about the type and alignment of the busway and public concern about the poor consultation by the City Deal. As was noted earlier (para.19), both MPs are calling for a slower and more measured process.

34. Also, a business case has yet to be developed, which demonstrates that a segregated busway (with necessary additional investments like the Western Orbital) could be operated viably by a commercial operator, who would provide High Quality Public Transport, without the need for long-term subsidies.

⁸ Cars, vans and motorbikes.

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35. It is also unclear, as yet, how much the scheme will cost and how much of the cost the developers of Bourn Airfield would be expected to pay. The 'official' estimate for the cost of the busway is £147 million. However, in our view, this is an understatement because it does not include 'Present Value Costs' which are clearly stated in the economic case and the Executive summary. With these included, the cost would be over £207¹⁰. Department for Transport Guidance clearly states that such schemes need to take account of all costs - which the official estimate does not. It is worth noting that the initial estimate for the cost of the St Ives guided busway was c.£50 million, yet the actual cost is now well over £160 million, and still climbing.

36. A major concern is that Papworth Hospital, the largest employer west of Cambridge, with 2,000 employees, is going to move to the Biomedical Park at Addenbrooke's in April 2018. Currently over 200 people living Cambourne work at Papworth Hospital, which is only 4 miles away. Since they are mainly shift workers, frequent bus services to the New Papworth Hospital would be needed from 0600 to 2400 each day, otherwise they would have no option but to travel to work by car.

37. **The imperative for an all-ways interchange at Girton.** In our view, an all-ways interchange at Girton is a critically important investment and was not included in the Modified Local Plan. **For the Coalition of Parish Councils and its 21 members this investment is a much higher priority than the Cambourne to Cambridge busway.**

38. The Girton Interchange (GI) is currently constrained because traffic travelling on the west (e.g., from Cambourne) on the A428 cannot turn south on the M11. This makes it difficult for commuters to travel by car from Cambourne to the new jobs at the rapidly growing biomedical park and biotech companies south of Cambridge, without rat-running on country roads through local villages. An upgraded GI would enable cars and buses to move more easily from the A428 corridor to the biotechnology cluster south of Cambridge without using local roads.

39. The GI is at the eastern end of the proposed Oxford-Milton Keynes – Cambridge Expressway. Despite local pressure, upgrading the GI was not included in the on-going A14 redevelopment and it is not clear yet whether it will form part of the work on the new Expressway. Even if it is, the earliest that we expect an upgraded GI interchange to be completed would be the late 2020's. **Given this, in our view, any discussion of developing Bourn Airfield is premature.**

Future AAP Development Plan Document

40. We wish to respond to the following three questions:

(vi) Paragraph 6y. Definitely.

(vii) Paragraph 6aa. We are strongly opposed to direct access for vehicles to the Broadway.

(viii) Paragraph 6cc. Definitely.

¹⁰ Present Value Costs include maintenance, risk and subsidies - not just the initial cost of construction.