

**CAMBRIDGE CITY AND SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE
LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATIONS**

MATTER 7 TRANSPORT

Name of Representor: Jeremy Jones (3747)

7A Strategic transport issues

General issues

i. Are all essential transport schemes/improvements identified in the Plans and is it clear how they will be delivered?

I wouldn't be surprised if I echoed almost every Cambridge resident if I said it wasn't evident at all whether or not all (or any) 'essential transport schemes/improvements' have been identified in the plan, or how they were to be delivered. This is primarily because Policy 5 contains virtually no information about the 'strategic transport infrastructure' required to support the significantly disruptive proposals included in the plan.

In an earlier hearing session, I was distressed to hear a representative of Cambridge County Council's strategic transport team suggest that the Transport Strategy for Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire (TSCSC) was available for consideration during the planning process. I distinctly remember the vote count in the Cambridge City Council main chamber on the occasion of the final approval to submit the Local Plan to the Inspectorate for review, as all the Labour City Councillors abstained, doing so to protest the fact that the Strategic Transport Plan wasn't ready and hadn't been included with the Local Plan for consideration. I am sure the comments by Councillor Blencowe to that effect will be in the minutes of the meeting.

I will not make any suggestions as to why the County Council's Strategic Transport team member suggested in the hearing that the documents were all available for consideration alongside the local plan. But as a result, in answer to the question: they may be identified in the plan, but they weren't available for review during the local consultations, which meant that the general public was entirely unable to see the implications of each site under consideration, especially GB1 and GB2.

Is it now clear how they will be delivered? Absolutely not. So much of the TSCSC is still speculative. For example, the Cambridge Southern Relief road, which would entail either disastrous environmental damage or the extraordinarily costly, risky and disruptive prospect of tunnelling under the Gog Magog Hills, is merely still a Civil Engineer's pipe dream, with no substantive

details as to costs or benefits. But the TSCSC is clear and accurate when it states: "if growth is to occur in the area, the transport network must be capable of dealing with it sustainably."

With regard specifically to Policy 26 (Site specific development opportunities for GB1, GB2, GB3 & GB4), there is virtually no mention at all of the implications for transport in the area. The A1307 Babraham Road is severely congested during the commuter hours of 7.30-9.30am and 4.00-6.00pm in the evening. From the Babraham Road Park and Ride to the Addenbrooke's Hospital roundabout is frequently at a complete standstill for long periods of time. This already bad situation will be significantly exacerbated when the Bell Language School site development begins, which will add a substantial amount of car traffic out onto Babraham Road as its primary site access/egress, Lime Kiln Road being so narrow, congested and hazardous. The inevitable risk of delay to emergency hospital traffic is another concern.

In order to properly assess the impact of including GB1 and GB2 as further development sites, we must use the standard trip multipliers to homes. Projected journeys derived from the number of properties (8.5 x 430 for GB1 & GB2) equals 3,655 daily trips. 2011's Cambridgeshire Traffic Monitoring Report (CTMR) says approximately 50% will be by car - 1,830 car movements per day - via a single Babraham Road access. The Bell School site (R42d within the Southern Fringe AOMC) will add a further 1,500 car movements (347 homes) onto the same heavily congested road, prior to a roundabout the Council describes as 'an accident cluster site' (Site Options report). In the TSCSC, it states in its vision "Accident clusters and congestion hotspots will be addressed" (p.7). Clearly in this location example, 'being addressed' is a euphemism for 'compounded'.

In all seriousness, the TSCSC's SWOT analysis in Section 5-2 states that: "The transport network is relatively constrained and has a finite capacity for vehicles; significant increases in vehicular traffic cannot be accommodated on the city's road network". The TSCSC recognises the problems of the region in 5-12, noting "Queues to get into Cambridge from the Gogs" as a major problem (p.82). Yet, if GB1 and GB2 were to be released from the Green Belt for development, in the space of some 150 yards, there is the risk of adding 2,330 additional car movements per day into some of the heaviest congestion in the City, immediately before an accident cluster site. The proposal is foolish, reckless, and bordering on negligent.

'But of course,' commercially interested landowners and developers would argue, 'building on the fringe of the City will mean that people won't use their cars to commute.' This is simply not realistic. The numbers above reflect only the 50% car commute that as implied in the CTMR suggests; if the normal figures were used, the traffic impacts would be even more disastrous.

In the Section 5-12 of the TSCSC (p.82), it states: "Further capacity will be provided at the inner ring of Park & Ride sites, with a view to intercepting more car journeys before they join the city's roads." Given that (as we've seen from the CTMR) additional development on the fringes - such as GB1 and GB2 inside the Park and Ride location - will inevitably produce more car trips, if there is scope to add significantly to the Park and Ride locations, it would make more sense to build outside of the Park and Ride locations and (as the TSCSC suggests), simply intercept the car journeys before they join the approach roads.

Already the rush hour queues reach back beyond Wandlebury most days of the year.

ii. Do the Plans adequately reflect the Local Transport Plan (LTP) and the Transport Strategy for Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire (TSCSC)?

No. Perhaps I am becoming increasingly cynical thanks to my involvement with local politicians and the City and County Council officers, but I find it strange that no mention is made of the Southern Relief Road in the Local Plan. I cannot help but thinking that it has a significant implication on the inclusion of GB1 and GB2 in the Local Plan. Development application CC911's proposal to build 4,700 homes from Babraham Road to Fulbourn was decisively rejected by the City Council's planning department, but it's difficult to believe that long-term plans for the Relief Road didn't factor into that decision in any way. The unpopularity incurred by tunnelling under the celebrated Gog Magog hills, together with a sprawling, large-scale residential development, would certainly have been significant. One wonders too how the land inside (i.e. on the City side of) the proposed path of the Southern Relief Road (half of which is owned by the County Council itself) should be deemed so profoundly inconsequential to the purposes of the Green Belt that it is suitable for reclassification and developable for housing. And once the tunnelling is complete, I'm guessing that suddenly the remainder of the CC911 protected land will be deemed as releasable from the Green Belt too, and the section 106 and infrastructure levy charges will help to pay for that significant tunnelling bill... I realise that this is conspiracy theorising of the worst kind, but it is difficult, given the tenuous reasoning advanced for the release of GB1 and GB2, not to have some nagging doubts that there are other reasons for the decision...

iii. Does the Transport evidence base, including, comply with paragraphs 54-001-20141010 to 54-011-20141010 of Planning Practice Guidance?

No – paragraph 001 states that “It is important for local planning authorities to undertake an assessment of the transport implications in developing or reviewing their Local Plan so that a robust transport evidence base may be developed to support the preparation and/or review of that Plan.” Paragraph 004 notes that an assessment of the transport implications should be undertaken:

- *as part of the initial evidence base in terms of issues and opportunities*
- *as part of the options testing*
- *as part of the preparation of the final submission*

Clearly, as mentioned above, the assessment of the implications had not been concluded in sufficient time for it to support either the preparation or the review of the Plan, by the public or even the City's Councillors, prior to its acceptance. This has not allowed the public to be appropriately consulted, either on the

plan's implications for the traffic of the city in which they live, or whether the damage to the value and permanence of the protected Green Belt through the proposal to release additional sites is in any way mitigated by transport infrastructure investment.

iv. Will the Plans encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport?

I believe that the mass transport improvements proposed in the TSCSC of additional rail capacity (including new stations) and the addition of further bus routes (perhaps using the old Cambridge-Colchester railway line) provides a better, more repeatable alternative to sustainable commuting than simply trying to squeeze in more homes in the fringes of the City.