

Cambourne Town Council
South Cambridgeshire District Council report: Tuesday 6th June 2023

Councillor Stephen Drew
Councillor Helene Leeming

Contact details for Cllrs Drew and Leeming:

Cllr Drew
cllr.drew@scambs.gov.uk
07445380811

Cllr Leeming
cllr.leeming@scambs.gov.uk
07974219202

This is the first report to the town council in our second year as district councillors since being elected in May 2022.

1. East West Rail announcement

It was great to finally see EWR make their route announcement on Thursday 25th May after what has seemed like a wait of epoch proportions. We were delighted to see that EWR have listened to the residents of our town and chosen to go with the sensible northern route past Cambourne, including for the location of the station. It is clear that placing the station near to the already existing road network of the A428 brings both the benefits of simplicity of providing access, as well as avoiding the need for a completely new set of roads through the nature reserve to the south of the town if that option had been chosen.

We remain concerned by the lack of clarity over the power system to be used for the new railway, and although the previously proposed diesel traction approach does not get specifically mentioned this time it is also not explicitly ruled out. It will be essential that we all continue to watch this aspect of the proposals.

We also note that the business case for EWR makes reference to a Cambourne population of "53000". Whilst it is unclear where exactly they are drawing the boundaries for "Cambourne" in this statement, and it seems safe to assume they are including both Cambourne and Bourn Airfield in this calculation, this does represent a significant increase in population for the town from the c30000 that the already planned additions of West Cambourne and Bourn Airfield bring to our area. Town councillors noted last year that the draft Local Plan included c2000 unassigned houses linked to the building of the new station, and this would add c5000 to the population. However, this possible figure of 35000 is still significantly short of the 53000 figure put forward by EWR and at this stage there is nothing in the Local Plan to account for this. Again it will be important for all of us to engage carefully with EWR and central government in relation to their plans.

Overall though we believe that the announcement of the building of East West Rail and the station at Cambourne is good news for residents and means that in the foreseeable future we will start to get the transport links that our town requires and deserves to have in place.

2. Cambourne to Cambridge Busway (C2C)

Following the welcome decision of Cambridgeshire County Council to agree to the building of the Cambourne to Cambridge Busway, Cllrs Drew and Leeming arranged a new tour of the proposed route with officers from the Greater Cambridge Partnership. We were particularly interested to discuss with officers the proposals for the route from Hardwick through to Grange Road as we recognise this part has been, and indeed in parts remains, subject to challenge from various protest groups, parish councils and residents.

We started at the Cambridge end of the route on Grange Road. We walked the lane off Grange Road by the Cambridge University Rugby Club that will be used to bring C2C on to Grange Road from where the buses will continue on into the city centre. The plans to widen the lane towards the rugby club's ground and training pitch were explained, along with the measures to be taken to deal with the loss of trees and hedgerow in that area.

We then visited the business park / science park area to the south of Madingley Road up to the M11. This is clearly a much simpler area for the route as the university is planning to completely redesign and rebuild the site over the next 20 years and C2C will simply use the road through the business park. The cycle route will also simply join up with what is already there. The building of a new bridge across the M11 was discussed and we specifically asked why it was not possible to simply use the existing bridge, or even perhaps widen it. The complications of the existing junction from the M11 and the need for National Highways to carry out major improvement works in the coming years to reflect the already increasing traffic on the Madingley Road route into Cambridge preclude this.

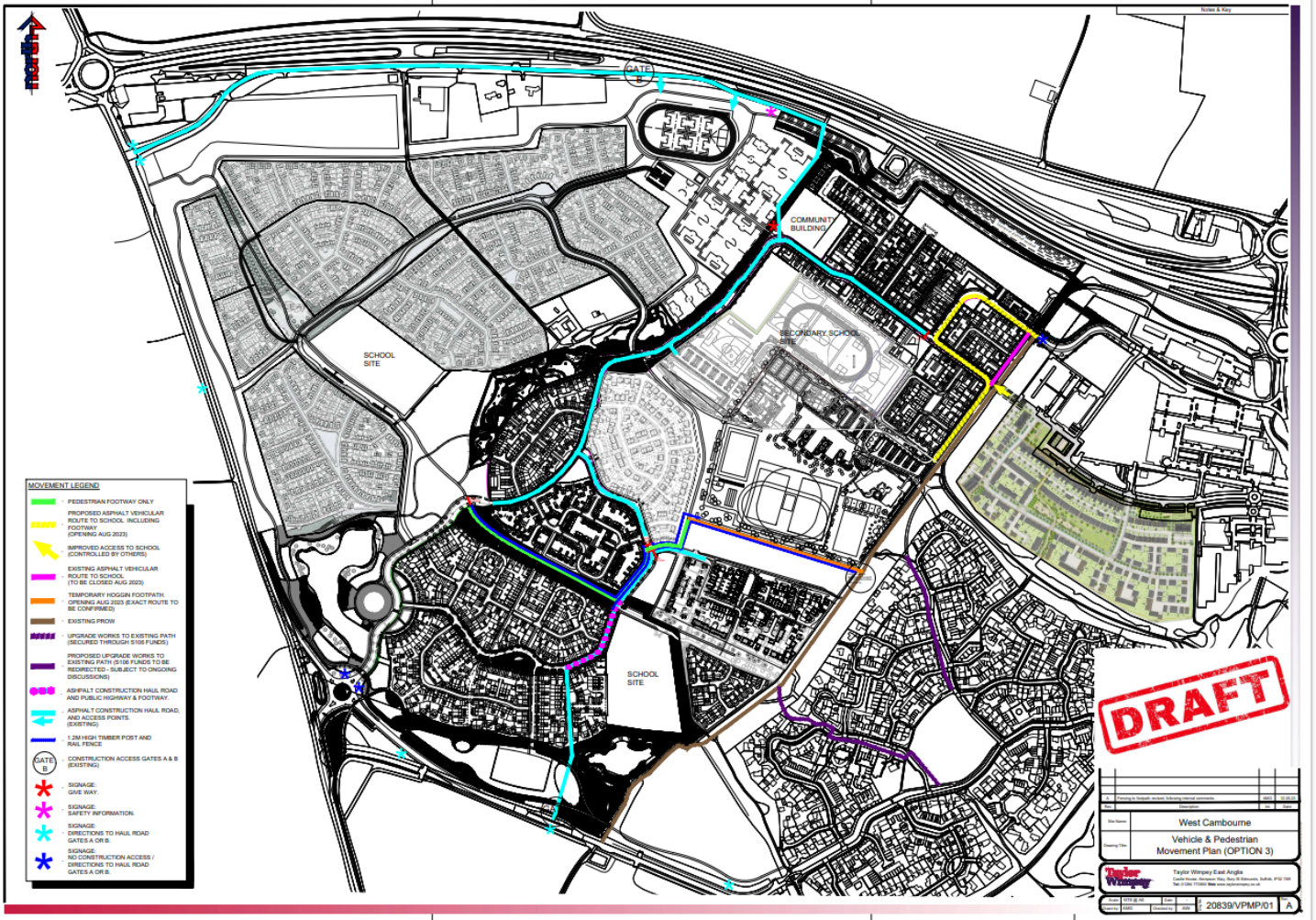
We then visited Coton Orchard, land to the north of the church in the west of the village and the American Cemetery on Madingley Hill. This is of course the most contentious part of the route and we were keen to further understand why GCP is adamant that the on road route preferred by Coton Parish Council and various other groups opposed to the GCP's route is not possible. On the existing road it is clear that there is simply not the space required for a full two lane road, bus lane and cycle path at many points on Madingley Hill and beyond up to the Madingley Mulch roundabout. The full width of the road, path and verge near to the cemetery for instance is clearly insufficient for this to be able to happen. The presence of an SSSI next to the cemetery at the top of Madingley Hill is also a further challenge to the onroad route's viability. There are also many points as the road goes down (or up) Madingley Hill where many mature and very large trees would have to be removed in order to create the necessary space for the busway to operate. Although we were already of the view that the onroad route is simply not viable to deliver the necessary services for Cambourne residents, our site visit to Madingley Road strongly reinforced this. We also visited Coton Orchard and found out about the historic footprint of the orchard and the public access arrangements. We visited the land to the north of the village where the proposed route will go. Clearly the building of the C2C busway is going to cause damage to the landscape in the area to the north of Coton, and we understand the wish of the parish council and those opposed to the proposed route to have the route put on the existing road. However, this is simply not the right approach when the reality of the Madingley Road space and configuration is considered.

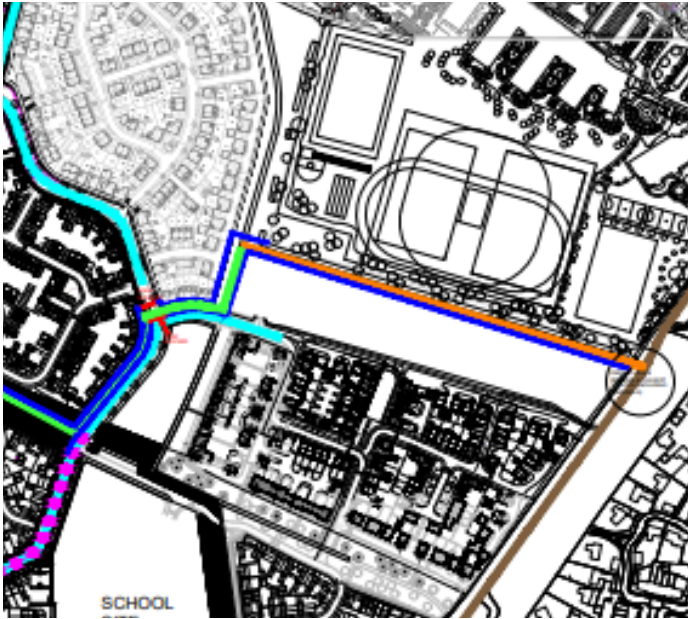
We then visited other places on the route such as Hardwick, Bourne Airfield and Upper Cambourne. Overall it is clear to us that the route proposed by GCP is the right one and that significant work will be done to mitigate the inevitable environmental costs that will occur once the busway is built.

3. West Cambourne transport link

The bus service for West Cambourne residents linking them to the rest of the town has now been in place for six weeks. The bus is popular. Indeed at times it has proven more popular than was envisaged. The first bus at 8am was full with some young people being unable to get on a few times early on in the service, but Cllr Leeming and Cllr Drew have been in daily touch with the residents, the bus company and the developers in order to make sure that a larger bus is sent for the first pick up of the day. Generally speaking the bus service

is running well. Occasionally a bus is late or does not appear, but this is rare. Good communications for all parties are key and residents remain pleased that their previous transport problems have been solved. The intention to build a pathway for walking and cycling to be open for the end of July 2023 remains on track based on all the information that we have at this time. The developers have been clear that the bus will continue to run until the path is in place, so even if there are delays in its construction the bus will still operate. The proposed route is shown below. As can be seen it runs down the side of the college site and links up with the bridleway that runs between Lower Cambourne and West Cambourne. The issues of the surface on the bridleways around Cambourne in the winter have been strongly communicated to the developers for them to deal with for this short section between the new path and the college entrance as it will get significant use until the road through West Cambourne is opened in perhaps the summer of 2024.





4. Chair of South Cambridgeshire District Council's Charity

Each year the chair of the council has a charity for which they fundraise throughout the year. The new chair of the council is Councillor Peter Fane who represented the Shelfords and Stapleford ward. Cllr Fane has kindly chosen the Cambourne Youth Partnership as his chair's charity for 2023-2024. Cllr Drew has linked Cllr Fane up with the chair of CYP as well as others in the group such as Cllr Patel of Cambourne Town Council. A first meeting will be held soon to begin this partnership working in support of the young people in our town.

Councillor Fane is keen to support young people in the district, and is aware of the high proportion of young people resident in Cambourne, partly because Cllrs Leeming and Drew have championed the young people of Cambourne on a number of occasions.

5. Cambourne Travel Summit

Although there is no specific progress to report to the town council on this occasion following the first Cambourne Travel Summit in May, we have confirmed with Anne Ainsworth, SCDC's Chief Operating Officer, that the notes from the meeting are being produced in detailed format. We have asked that each of the agreed actions is assigned to specific officers within the district or county councils wherever this is appropriate. The report will identify actions and next steps which will allow us to both monitor progress and also to keep the necessary focus in place to ensure work is done as agreed.

6. Lloyds Pharmacy

Cllr Leeming conveyed the concerns of the town council regarding the pharmacy to SCDC's health and well-being officer and asked that they would be passed on to the relevant county bodies overseeing pharmacies in our area.

7. SCIP Development

Whilst we have no news on the SCIP development of housing on the land opposite the South Cambs Hall, we note that the development has not been moved to the planning committee and there has been no further comment in public from the council or the development partnership.

8. Introducing the Cambridgeshire Community Hubs Network

Residents across South and East Cambridgeshire can continue to benefit from local support in community buildings this summer, thanks to a new initiative developed on the back of the original Warm Hubs concept that ran in local communities from October 2022 to the end of March 2023. In South Cambridgeshire, 16 Community Hubs are funded until at least the end of August 2023 with more funding under negotiation. Find out more – including the location of the Community Hubs -

<https://www.cambsacre.org.uk/projects/cambridgeshire-community-hubs-network/>

<https://www.scambs.gov.uk/introducing-the-cambridgeshire-community-hubs-network/>