



02 August 2021

Transport Infrastructure Planning Unit,
Department for Transport,
Great Minster House,
33 Horseferry Road,
London, SW1P 4DR.

Dear Sir or Madam

Network Rail (Cambridge South Infrastructure Enhancements) Order

We wish to object to the TWAO.

We are dismayed that the concerns raised by local residents in the earlier consultations appear to have been ignored particularly those relating to the impact on Hobson Park.

We accept that a station is probably necessary but the plans fill us with sadness on two counts: the permanent loss of and damage to parts of Hobson Park and the very large area of the park being taken during the construction phase.

It seems to us that these decisions are dominated by one consideration only - cost. It is cheaper and simpler to take land from the park, permanently, or temporarily during construction, than it is to take it from alternative sites on the east side of the railway.

Why is the park so important to the citizens of Cambridge? There are two reasons.

Firstly, it is part of one of the green corridors extending from the surrounding green belt and countryside into central Cambridge. Studies increasingly show how important these are in supporting biodiversity by permitting wildlife to move from place to place.

Secondly, the COVID-19 pandemic has emphasised the importance of places like Hobson Park for people's mental and physical well being.

The Public Health England website has this statement:

"We've known for some time that good quality natural landscape in urban areas can affect how people feel. It reduces stress and sadness, lifts the mood and makes us feel better".

<https://publichealthmatters.blog.gov.uk/2016/11/09/green-space-mental-wellbeing-and-sustainable-communities/>

So the impact of the proposed rail station on the park is of great importance to the people of Cambridge. The importance of the green corridors/green belt are emphasised in both the Cambridge Local Plan and the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan.

The park was created in mitigation for loss of open space to the huge housing developments to the SW of the city. It must be protected.

Why is Hobson Park so vulnerable?

Land of the sort we find in Hobson Park is often sacrificed because it costs less to invade it than it does to protect it by placing infrastructure in places where it is more costly. Sadly, there are several examples of this in the proposed plans for the station. These include:

(i) Extensive cycle parking on the west side of the station in the park when more of it ought to be placed on the east side;

(ii) A completely new access path to the station along the south side of North Ditch along the fringe of the wood planted by children at Fawcett Primary School in 2012. **This new access path ought to be placed along the north side of North Ditch between the busway and the Ditch.** This would provide a much better link to the cycle path along the busway and it would significantly reduce the impact on the park.

(iii) The existing footpath approaching the station from the SW is being "raised to provide level access into the station". **Why is this necessary when level access is being provided by (ii) above?** The raised path would be very intrusive and threaten the wood referred to in (ii) above which is becoming well established now.

(iv) In the triangle of land south of Nine Wells Bridge and bordered by Hobson Brook to the SW and the railway line to the east there is a clear example of invasion onto park land to accommodate the new sub station and enclosure for railway plant and equipment. Presumably it is cheaper to do this than to find alternative sites for them. **This triangle is a crucial part of the green corridor.** The new Addenbrooke's Road cuts right across the green corridor but this triangle of land plus the wide open spaces under the bridge link open spaces south of the road to the park on the north side of Nine Wells Bridge. A better place for the sub station and enclosure would be to the east of the railway line somewhere between Nine Wells Bridge and the busway bridge.

The "Exchange Land" to the S of Addenbrooke's Road is scant compensation for the losses.

(v) Construction compounds. **These seem to be excessively large.** Again it is clear that these are being placed in the park because it is cheaper and easier to put them there than to find space for them to the east of the railway line. The main western compound and the satellite compound to the south of the busway bridge are both of particular concern. **The main western compound occupies the whole of the triangle referred to in (iv) above** while creation of the satellite compound will destroy an area of young woodland.

yours faithfully

Richard and Vanessa Price