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**OBJ 7**

**Cambridge South Station – Application by Network Rail for “The Network Rail (Cambridge South Infrastructure Enhancements) Order 202[X]”, June 2021**

## **PROOF OF EVIDENCE**

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. David Plank gives evidence on behalf of the Trumpington Residents' Association ("the Association"). I am a Trustee and Director of the Association, which is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee, with subscribing members who live in Trumpington.
- 1.2. To avoid unnecessary duplication, the documents on which we rely and to which we refer in this Proof are those cited and reproduced as appendices in the Statement of Common Ground agreed between Network Rail Infrastructure Limited (NRIL) and the Association dated 18 January 2022. These include the Association's letter of objection dated 30 July 2021 subsequently re-issued on 20 August 2021 to the Department for Transport's Transport Infrastructure Planning Unit as the TRA's statement of case. [Appendix 1 to the Statement]
- 1.3. The issues we address are those identified in the Statement of Common Ground as areas not yet agreed between the Association and NRIL.

## 2. Adverse effects on Hobson's Park – context

- 2.1. Hobson's Park is important to residents of Trumpington and Cambridge because it is an essential Green Belt link in the "River Corridor – Hobson's Brook/Vicar's Brook" which is "a defining Character of Cambridge"<sup>1</sup>. Despite its location beside the West Anglia Mainline, it is a tranquil place with a successful bird reserve and quiet walks, away from the traffic experienced in significant parts of Trumpington. Hobson's Park was created in mitigation of the substantial land taken out of the Green Belt in the 2006 Cambridge Local Plan to provide for growth in the major "Southern Fringe" developments – accordingly, it has a particular status for residents. While there is strong support for the Cambridge Biomedical Campus, there is **very strong feeling** amongst residents against diminution of that mitigation – either temporary or permanent - to meet the Campus's growth needs.
- 2.2. If aspects of Network Rail's application are not modified, Hobson's Park would be harmed to the detriment of residents. While significant progress has been made in our discussions with NRIL to reduce this harm, there is some way to go before the application is acceptable. Progress needs to be made on the aspects of the application that follow. The detail of these concerns is given in our letter of objection dated 30 July 2021 and in the Statement of Common Ground as it relates to the areas where agreement has yet to be reached - the nub is given in the sections that follow.

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<sup>1</sup> Landscape Character Assessment, 2003, 3.1.5, pages 28 & 41-43, which has been adopted as a material planning consideration, and Cambridge Local Plan 2018, Policy 4, Green Belt, pages 28-30.

3. **Temporary adverse effects on Hobson's Park** (pages 5-6 of the letter of objection - Appendix 1 to the Statement of Common Ground)

- 3.1. We were horrified when we first saw the original proposal to remove 35 per cent of Hobson's Park from residents' use for upwards of two years. Our great relief that it is now "only" 17 per cent is relative not absolute. As Network Rail confirms, the new station is intended primarily to serve the growing needs of the Cambridge Biomedical Campus. This has been our understanding since 2016 when the idea of a station was first shared with us. Therefore, to our mind, when the station is being built, it is the still under construction Campus which should take the strain not our flourishing well-established Park. Hobson's Park should not bear an undue part of this burden.
- 3.2. It is for this reason that on 3 December 2021, we asked NRIL the question: "What construction activities are planned to take place in and from the western station building compound and, similarly, what construction activities are planned for the eastern station building compound? Will there be fabrication activity at either or both?" [Reproduced in paragraph 7.2.2 of the Statement of Common Ground]
- 3.3. ***We remain concerned*** at the disparity in size between the construction compound for the western station building and the compound on the eastern Campus side of the railway line. If activities are planned in the western compound for a purpose other than construction of the western station building, we wish to scrutinize and, if necessary, challenge them. We await NRIL's answer to our question and maintain this element of our objection meanwhile.

4. **Proposed shared use path to the western station building: A. The part of the path from the Cambridge Guided Busway to the embankment to Addenbrooke's Bridge** (page 7 of the letter of objection)

- 4.1. ***We object*** to the proposal that the shared use path to the western station building should be roughly 50 metres into the Park rather than running alongside the Guided Busway shared use path as we propose. If approved, this would deny access to a 50-metre wide strip of the Park between the two paths which the public now use in significant numbers for passive recreation purposes. The land would still be there but to get to it at peak times the public would have to cross a path busy with fast moving cyclists and walkers intent on getting from point A to B. Because it could not be used with comfort, it would not be used. Also, the tranquillity of the Park would be disturbed by lots of cyclists and walkers crossing it who do not do so now.
- 4.2. The unwanted 50-metre distance to the Guided Busway's shared use path is also unnecessary. Our alternative simply moves the path 50 metres to the north to run

alongside the Guided Busway path. Network Rail do not object to this, nor we understand does Cambridge City Council which is responsible for managing the Park. The issue appears to be which council, City or County, will take responsibility for adopting the path and paying for its maintenance. If this is correct, the decision should be determined in the public interest – which is to have unfettered use of our Park, including the 50 metre strip.

- 4.3. To be clear, our alternative is that the shared use path to the western station building should run alongside and be distinct from the Guided Busway path to the Biomedical Campus; with, if necessary, a suitably designed barrier in between to ensure distinct capacity for and safety of both, and suitable interconnections between the paths for the convenience of cyclists and walkers.<sup>2</sup> **We ask** that our alternative is adopted as part of the Order.

## 5. **Cycle parking at the western station building** (pages 10-11 of the letter of objection)

- 5.1. As the prime purpose of the new station is to serve the needs of the growing Cambridge Biomedical Campus, the prime responsibility for meeting the station's access needs, including cycling, should be on its Campus side not on the western side adversely affecting Hobson's Park. We accept the case for some cycle parking at the western side of the station but not for one-half of it, which would have an unfair adverse effect on Hobson's Park and its users. NRIL's initial response to our rejection of their proposal and our rebuttal of that response are shown on pages 10-11 of our letter of objection.
- 5.2. The intrusive nature of the proposed cycle parking is shown in the relevant drawing and the Design & Access Statement<sup>3</sup>. Not only is this proposal entirely unacceptable to the Association, it is also in conflict with NRIL's stated intention that the "Hobson's Park Entrance" to the station "aim(s) to sit *discreetly* in the corner of the Park". The proposal is obtrusive not discreet. Remembering that this "corner of the Park" is currently out of sight as it is below the level of the railway line behind a mound, while the cycle parking would be at the same level as the station platforms and, therefore, much more visible.
- 5.3. To protect Hobson's Park, our letter of objection asks that the number of cycle spaces at the western side is reduced to 300 or less plus 20 spaces for larger size bicycles, and that obtrusive two-tier racks are not provided. The Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust has asked that 70 per cent of the cycle

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<sup>2</sup> See email dated 7 December 2021 to Cambridgeshire County Council Councillor and officers – available on request.

<sup>3</sup> Drawing 158454-ARC-ZZ-ZZ-DRG-LEP-000081, and D&AS, NR 15, Figure 5-11, "Example of a landscaped cycle parking canopy with controlled lighting", page 35.

spaces be provided on the eastern side of the station, a request we support. Significant movement towards that percentage *is requested*.

6. **Electricity sub-station and rail systems enclosure** (pages 11-12 of the letter of objection)

- 6.1. Network Rail's proposal would place this facility in the direct line of sight from the southern part of Hobson's Park at Cambridge City edge to White Hill, which is the first part of the Gog Magog Hills, and directly alongside Hobson's Brook. The sight line, varying as the seasons unfold, is much enjoyed by residents, as is the amenity of Hobson's Brook and its biodiverse life. Not only is it the wrong place to put the enclosure it is also unnecessary. We have suggested an alternative site nearer the railway line which would take it out of the line of sight and away from Hobson's Brook. While it is not the reason for our objection, we understand that our proposed location would have the added advantage of reducing the length of the High Voltage and Signalling cables that would run from the compound directly to the railway corridor<sup>4</sup>.
- 6.2. **We ask** that this facility is moved nearer to the railway line out of the sight line to White Hill and away from Hobson's Brook.

7. **Transport Context – Highways and Public Transport** (pages 14-15 of the letter of objection)

- 7.1. The technical requirement that each project must plan on the assumption that the others will not proceed leads to frustration for residents. The combined proposals of Network Rail for the station, the Greater Cambridge Partnership for Cambridge South East Transport, and the Cambridge Biomedical Campus for the Campus, result in one bus stop on Francis Crick Avenue southbound on the opposite side of the road from the station on the other side of the dedicated guided busway as well as the two carriageways - and there is no guarantee that ordinary buses will be able to use the stops on the dedicated busway. This is **not acceptable**. It is imperative that there are adequate bus interchange facilities serving the station - even more so now that the Greater Cambridge Partnership has announced its intention to introduce a much improved Greater Cambridge bus network next year, well connected with the station and the Biomedical Campus (see the "Making Connections" public consultation which ended last December).
- 7.2. The Association has asked NRIL to use its good offices to secure satisfactory assurances with the other two parties to this matter that the new station will have

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<sup>4</sup> Network Rail letter to the Association dated 28 September 2021, page 3.

adequate bus interchange facilities, and share the assurances with us thus removing this element of our objection. ***The Inquiry may wish*** to include the provision of essential bus interchange facilities for the station by the applicant in co-operation with relevant bodies as a condition of granting the Order.

David Plank  
For Trumpington Residents' Association  
18<sup>th</sup> January 2022