

Natural Environment

Landscape Consultation Response



Reference Number:	21/02957/TWA
Proposal:	Construction and operation of a new two storey, four platform station on the West Anglia Main adjacent to the Cambridge Biomedical Campus, and associated works to the rail infrastructure.
Site Address:	West Anglia Main Line Land Adjacent to Cambridge Biomedical Campus Cambridge
Case Officer:	Charlotte Burton
Responding Officer:	Dinah Foley-Norman
Date:	13 July 2021

Landscape Comments:

Network Rail are seeking consent for Cambridge South Station at land to the west of the CBC Campus and Addenbrooke's Hospital. Network Rail are applying to the Secretary of State for a Transport and Works Act Order including all related infrastructure and enabling works along with a 'Deemed Planning Permission' that will be submitted simultaneously with the TWAO and seeks permission for the siting, massing and volume of the station and other works that make up the proposed development. The request for Deemed Planning Permission includes the following components. Parameter Plans for 'Access and Movement', 'Land Use and Landscape' and 'Heights'.

The full details of the scale and external appearance of the station building, proposed landscape and public realm works are 'reserved' for subsequent approval by the LPAs through planning conditions set out as draft in the Request for Deemed Planning Permission.

The Landscape Team have been involved in pre-application discussions with the applicant as part of Network Rail's engagement with the LPAs. The discussions looked at the level of detail to be provided through the TWAO and Deemed Planning Permission and the detail to be provided through conditions. We have also discussed in some detail the landscape and public realm issues.

It is however disappointing that the level of detailed information requested prior to submission related to issues such as the potential depositing of spoil on the public open space/green belt, particularly to the west of the application site was not able to be provided.

The opportunity to provide landscape comments on the Transport and Works Act and Deemed Planning Consent application for South Station is welcome and are as follows:.

Overall design response to context – From a landscape perspective the proposals have the potential to respond well to the complex surroundings. The proposals are that the station building will bridge the transition between Hobson's Park public open space, which has a focus on the countryside, and the much more urban environment of the Cambridge Biomedical Campus. The design approach of the building aims to have two appropriate sides; one to face the more urban and one to face the more rural. It also aims to remain physically low in the landscape to reduce the impact on the Park yet have a presence against the backdrop of the significant buildings of CBC. The design details so far seen of the proposals have the potential to reflect the difference.

Parameter Plans – 1) Parameter Plan: Access and Movement (Drawing: 158454-ARC-ZZ-ZZDRG-LEP-000100 Rev P01) Overall, the information and details shown on the parameter plan are considered acceptable in landscape terms.

2) Parameter Plan: Land Use and Landscape (Drawing: 158454-ARC-ZZ-ZZDRG-LEP-000101 Rev P01) The detail shown is considered acceptable in landscape terms. However, the notation relating to the green/biodiverse roof to have 'potential' should be removed as other information with the submission implies that the green/biodiverse roof is a definite and valuable feature to include.

3) Parameter Plan: Heights (Drawing: 158454-ARC-ZZ-ZZ-DRG-LEP-000102 Rev P01) The information and details shown on the proposed parameter plan are considered acceptable in landscape terms.

Generation of and disposal of spoil (waste) – There has been a concern by the LPA throughout the pre-application discussions that the open space amenity value and biodiversity gains created within Hobson's Park since its construction would be severely impacted by the development of South Station.

Although the open space, Hobson's Park, might be able to accommodate a modest amount of spoil in landscape terms through the introduction of additional low mounding, the impact of the main site compound, together with the mounding, would have a significant detrimental impact on the Park's biodiversity.

We asked the question whether it would be more harmful to the environment to try and accommodate as much spoil on site as possible versus the environmental impact of taking it off site to recycle. We see in the Planning Statement and the Environmental Statement that *'The excavation activities required in order to construct the new station platforms and undertake track widening works is estimated to lead to approximately 9,600m³ of excess unbulked spoil. Opportunities to retain the excess spoil onsite have been exhausted and the spoil is expected to be suitable for reuse on other schemes. The surplus excavation spoil will be diverted to another, preferably local scheme for use as fill material.'*

We read that to mean that the total amount of spoil is to be taken off site and recycled wherever possible. However, the area covered by the main site compound/temporary storage facility remains as large as previously shown still resulting in considerable harm to the existing biodiversity of the Park. In order to protect as much land and existing biodiversity as possible, we would ask if this area still needs to be as large as shown or whether it can be reduced?

We require details of the site compound/temporary storage facility preferable prior to determination, i.e. how long it will be in place and what it consists of. We will also require detailed information on the stripping and storage of the existing low nutrient topsoil prior to temporary surfacing being laid within the main compound and what that surfacing

will be, as well as other remedial works to be carried out when the compound is removed. The remedial works can be covered with other cultivation and planting activities in the proposed Condition 26 in Schedule 1 : Proposed Planning Conditions.

Impact on existing vegetation - The detailed assessment of the impact on existing vegetation through various compounds and haul routes has not been provided. We note on drawing 158454-ARC-00-ZZ-DRG-EMF-200001 Rev. P02.1 that one of the haul routes will have an effect on the TPO tree belt to the north and south of Long Road. We also note that there will be removal of a mature tree and hedgeline shown on the Indicative Landscape Plans, Sheets 1 of 4 along the western boundary of the Long Road Sixth Form College. The removal of this mature vegetation will be extremely impactful on of the canopy cover quantum in the city as well as for ecology, biodiversity and landscape screening.

We require a detailed assessment, in the form of an Arboricultural Implications Assessment and Arboricultural Method Statement of vegetation to be removed on all sites temporary and permanent. The information must be shown on accurate scaled plans and include the temporary and permanent proposals overlaid onto accurate topographical survey information (including levels) of all areas of vegetation to be removed. All efforts must be made to retain the existing vegetation in an undamaged condition. The assessments will comply with BS 5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction.

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment – The methodology used in the LVIA is compliant with the guidance set out in ‘Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition’ (GLVIA3) (Ref. 1) and it is proportionate and appropriate. We agree to a large extent with the findings and conclusions of the assessment in relation to both the landscape character and visual impacts.

However, the findings and conclusions of the LVIA, are partly reliant on the successful mitigation through the landscape proposals. Because of the outline nature of the application, we do not have sufficient detail of the landscape proposals to provide unreserved assurance of the success of the mitigation.

Consideration of Green Belt Issues – The proposals for Cambridge South Station are located almost entirely in Green Belt and will have an effect on the purposes of Green Belt. The methodology used for assessing the effect on the purposes of Green Belt, as detailed in the NPPF and the specific Cambridge Green Belt purposes, conforms to the methodology used in the Cambridge Inner Green Belt Boundary Study, November 2015.

The reported impacts for each of the Green Belt sectors affected by the proposals are in the categories of none, negligible, minor and in some instances beneficial. However, the findings and conclusions of the assessment as set out in the report, are reliant on the successful mitigation through the landscape proposals. Because of the outline nature of the application, we do not have sufficient detail of the landscape proposals to provide unreserved assurance of the success of the mitigation.

Public Open Space Assessment – It is understood that two areas of Public Open Space are permanently required; one being part of Hobson’s Park (TL1) and one being part of the western boundary of Long Road Sixth Form college grounds (TL2).

We note the statement in the Assessment on page 58 : *‘In relation to the impact during construction, the assessment recognises that ‘Temporary significant adverse effects during construction are anticipated on both areas of POS in relation to recreational and visual amenity. However, as these effects are temporary, it is not anticipated that there will*

be any long-term significant adverse effects as a result of the construction of the proposed Development.' The impact of the physical presence of the main compound and haul road might be temporary, but the establishment of the landscape proposals and regaining of the biodiversity value will take years to regain. This is particularly so for the loss of any mature trees which may have taken 30 to 50 years to mature to their current stature.

Site ref. TL1 (170,503m²) immediately to the west of the railway line is to provide temporary access and use as a site compound for construction of the western station areas including storage and sorting areas for excavated materials prior to removal off-site. At this time, the land is not formally designated as protected open space within the Cambridge Local Plan, although it lies within designated Green Belt. The land take comprises a width of maintenance track immediately adjacent to the Network Rail boundary and a width of mounding, immature scrub and tree planting and semi-improved neutral grassland that was introduced at the time of constructing the park to soften the visual effects of the Cambridge Biomedical Campus for the residents of Great Kneighton.

Although the loss of semi-improved neutral grassland, scrub and woodland will be mitigated through replacement planting the biodiversity value will take some years to regain. Further details (including planting plans) will be included within the landscape design to be submitted pursuant to a condition.

As stated in Chapter 13 of the Landscape and Visual section of the ES, it is anticipated that because of the limited timescale and the proposed mitigation that the impact on visual and recreational amenity of the Park is categorised as minor adverse during the construction phase and not significant. The land will be returned to POS following completion of the construction works. However, as mentioned above there is no confirmation of the length of time the site compound and spoil sorting facility will be required. The judgement of minor adverse may increase the longer the facility is in place.

Site ref. TL2 (2,761m²) is an area of Protected Open space as identified in the Cambridge Local Plan and required to provide temporary access and use for construction of the Up Loop line which will pass through the eastern side of the proposed new Cambridge South Station. It forms a wooded area along the western boundary of the school. The strip of land as identified on the Indicative Landscape Drawings 158454-ARC-00-ZZ-DRG-EEN-000074, P02 and drawing 158454-ARC-00-ZZ-DRG-EEN-000075, P02 shows mature boundary planting to be removed.

Within Chapter 8 (Biodiversity) of the Environmental Statement it states that the proposals *'will result in a temporary, adverse effect to Long Road Sixth Form College grounds that is significant at the local level in the short term (3-5 years) until replacement planting or natural regeneration becomes established'*. After this point, no significant residual effects are predicted.' We estimate the age of the existing vegetation to be 30-50 years. The replacement planting will take far longer than 3-5 years to mature to the canopy cover and condition that it is currently at and therefore the residual effects will be more significant.

As well as replacement planting, compensation measures will also include exchange land to the south of the Addenbrooke's Road (ref. EL4) which will become Public Open Space permanently. Although the area is slightly more in terms of square metres and welcomed as an extension of the POS in another character area with more connection to the countryside to the south, it is somewhat remote from the main part of the Park being divided from it by a road.

Railway Systems and Substation Compound - Drg.158454-ARC-ZZ-ZZ-DRG-LEP-000054 Rev P01 (Deemed Planning Drawings Sheet 4 of 5) shows the location and size of the Substation and Railway Systems and Substation Compound together with the

proposed landscape buffer. The land take for this facility should be carefully considered at detailed design. The area must be carefully integrated into its rural location and the land take minimised to give maximum opportunity to improve the surrounding environment.

Green Biodiverse Roof – It is noted on drawing 158454-ARC-00-ZZ-DRG-EEN-000074 P02 there is a '*potential green biodiverse roof*'. However in other documents there are statements that imply the proposal is definite. We would like confirmation of this feature that is beneficial to drainage and biodiversity as soon as possible. Confirmation should include information on the gradient of the roofs and whether the slopes are shallow enough to accommodate a biodiverse/green roof. Further details of the feature can be conditioned.

Potential climbers/green wall (to south facing station facade) – we note the proposal for a biodiverse green wall. We would request details of this feature as soon as possible particularly as many types of green walls are not sustainable and are high maintenance.

Conclusion - We appreciate the commitment stated throughout the submission documents that remedial works have been carefully considered and will be undertaken to a good standard. However, there will be a loss of public and protected open space and there will be a loss of canopy cover and biodiversity that can only be replaced over many years. We therefore trust that the remedial and replacement landscape works will be carried out and maintained until handover to highest standard in order that there is assurance that these works will establish quickly and thrive in the long term.

We also appreciate that the detailed information on the remedial work will be covered by condition. We would like to suggest an additional condition specifically related to site compounds and haul routes and how they will be set up and removed and the remedial works prior to landscape cultivation that must happen. The additional condition wording would be:

Site compounds and haul routes - No development shall commence until full details of the site compounds and temporary storage facilities have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority and these works shall be carried out as approved. The information shall include plans and sections of the site compounds and haul routes together with detailed information on the stripping and storage of the existing low nutrient topsoil prior to the temporary surfacing being laid and the type surfacing. Information on how long each compound will be in place will be required as well as how the surfacing will be removed and how the ground beneath will be remediated and decompacted prior to topsoil resspreading and other landscape works being carried out.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and to ensure that suitable hard and soft landscape is provided as part of the development (Cambridge Local Plan 2018; Policies 55, 57 and 59).