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BY EMAIL

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Dear Edward Durrant,

**Cambourne Expansion Planning Reference S/2903/14/OL**

Cambridge Cycling Campaign works for better, safer and more cycling in and around Cambridge and has over 1,100 paid members. We scrutinise planning applications and proposals to assess whether they will facilitate safer cycling and encourage more people to cycle. Our response to proposals is based on such assessment.

**Summary**

The SCDC emerging policy states amongst the design and access requirements “high quality pedestrian and cycle routes through the site”. Additionally, the National Planning Policy Framework states the importance of

- Promoting sustainable transport
- Promoting healthy communities

The current design and access statement does not meet these criteria. Existing cycling access within and outside Cambourne is poor, resulting in low levels of cycling compared to other towns and villages in South Cambridgeshire. The proposals do not significantly improve cycling connections outside Cambourne, and continue the current poor quality provision within Cambourne. In such conditions walking and cycling for transport will be low, and the health benefits of active transport will not be realised. Existing modal share shows that two-thirds of local journeys are driven, despite the short distances involved.

No distinction has been made between walking and cycling in the proposals, with routes shared. Unsegregated shared-use provision is poor for both walking and cycling, creating conflict between users. The problems of poor shared-use are described at

<http://www.camcycle.org.uk/newsletters/111/article11.html>

The suggested reasonable maximum cycling distance of 5km is less than current average cycle to work distance surveyed by Travel For Cambridgeshire of over 5.5km, let alone the

longer distances that people are willing to cycle. Such low aspirations inevitably result in poor proposals, as the need for continuous and direct cycling routes is underestimated.

### **Quality of network within Cambourne**

The access document states that “Primacy has been given to walking, cycling and community transport”, but diagrams show winding paths which do not meet walking and cycling desire lines, and requirement to give way to motor traffic even on minor residential roads. This means interrupted trips via active transport in favour of continuous trips by private car, the reverse of the claimed hierarchy.

The design documents refer to “on and off-road segregated routes”, but this terminology has been mis-applied. Segregated cycle routes are, crucially, separated from both motor traffic and pedestrians, but none are proposed.

### **Cycling access outside of Cambourne**

Cambourne is surrounded by A-roads which are entirely unsuited to cycling due to speed and volume of traffic. Other road connections are on rural roads, which have the highest collision rates of all types of road for all users, and the results of collision at speed are likely to be fatal for someone on foot or bike.

Where there are off-road connections they are narrow and right next to the carriageway, where noise and air pollution levels are high. Other connections are unsurfaced bridleways, unsuitable for the majority of bikes all-year and all-weather, and for travelling any distance for transport.

Proposals to improve the St Neots Road address only driver awareness, and as such are totally inadequate either as a safety intervention or to encourage cycling. Without infrastructure to separate people on bikes from high speed motor vehicles cycling levels will remain low.

Potential contribution to improvements for routes to Caxton, Papworth Everard, Bourne, Knapwell and Elsworth are described as “predominantly leisure routes” in Appendix 9.1A. We take this to mean it is expected to be of too poor quality for transport trips, continuing the dependence of the residents of Cambourne on inactive travel, and the associated health, pollution and congestion impacts.

### **Spine Road**

The design and access document describes how the spine road will be routed through the community hub and through green space. It is entirely inappropriate to have a spine road through a community hub, even with traffic calming. The volumes of traffic will make it hard to cross roads irrespective of speed, and pedestrians defer to motor vehicles in such circumstances. In this respect experiments in shared-paving in Poynton and Exhibition Road have failed: only where there is no through-route for motor traffic can a semi-pedestrianised area succeed. The route as proposed will be noisy and unnecessarily polluted, which will discourage relaxed browsing of shops and active transport, and the café culture desired.

Likewise the ability to enjoy the central green spine will be impaired by routing the main road through it, as well as affecting local wildlife and plant species.

## **Conclusion**

Current proposals to expand Cambourne continue the mistakes of the original development in making walking and cycling less convenient and pleasant than using a private car. The combining of all walking and cycling routes disadvantages both modes of transport, as can already be seen in the existing low modal share for active transport in Cambourne.

Our Guide, Making Space For Cycling <http://www.makingspaceforcycling.org/> has been endorsed by all national cycling organisations and outlines the kind of high quality cycle infrastructure we expect from a new development seeking to promote health and sustainability through supporting cycling.

Well designed walking and cycling routes, suitable for a wide variety of utility trips, such as school, shopping or work, can provide a good alternative to many private car trips, even those greater than 5km, but only if all kinds of people can feel their trip is safe, convenient, and not mixed with other types of user.

Yours sincerely,  
on behalf of Cambridge Cycling Campaign,

Hester Wells