

Cambridge South East Transport Scheme (CSETS)

Briefing document for councillors and GCP Assembly

Produced by Better Ways for Busways!: Great Shelford Parish Council, Stapleford Parish Council, Babraham Parish Council, Cambridge Past, Present & Future, Magog Trust, Hobsons Conduit Trust, CPRE (the countryside charity), Railfutures East Anglia and Cambridge Connect.

Executive Summary

The Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) is proposing to build 8 km of new road across open countryside to the south of Cambridge, and a large new car park. The road would only be open to buses using a guidance system. The GCP is also proposing an active travel route alongside the road.

The project will cost ~£130m and have significant impacts on landscape and environment and is not supported by the local community.

There is an alternative transport solution which:

- Can deliver similar transport and economic benefits but for ~£100m less.
- Would have less impact on landscape, environment and community.
- Can be delivered in stages with immediate impact.
- Has community support.

In light of significant changes over the past 5 years, we are asking elected councillors and members of the GCP Assembly and Board not to proceed with an 8 km road through countryside and instead progress plans for a 1.6 km road and 1-2 km of bus lane in the A1307 corridor.

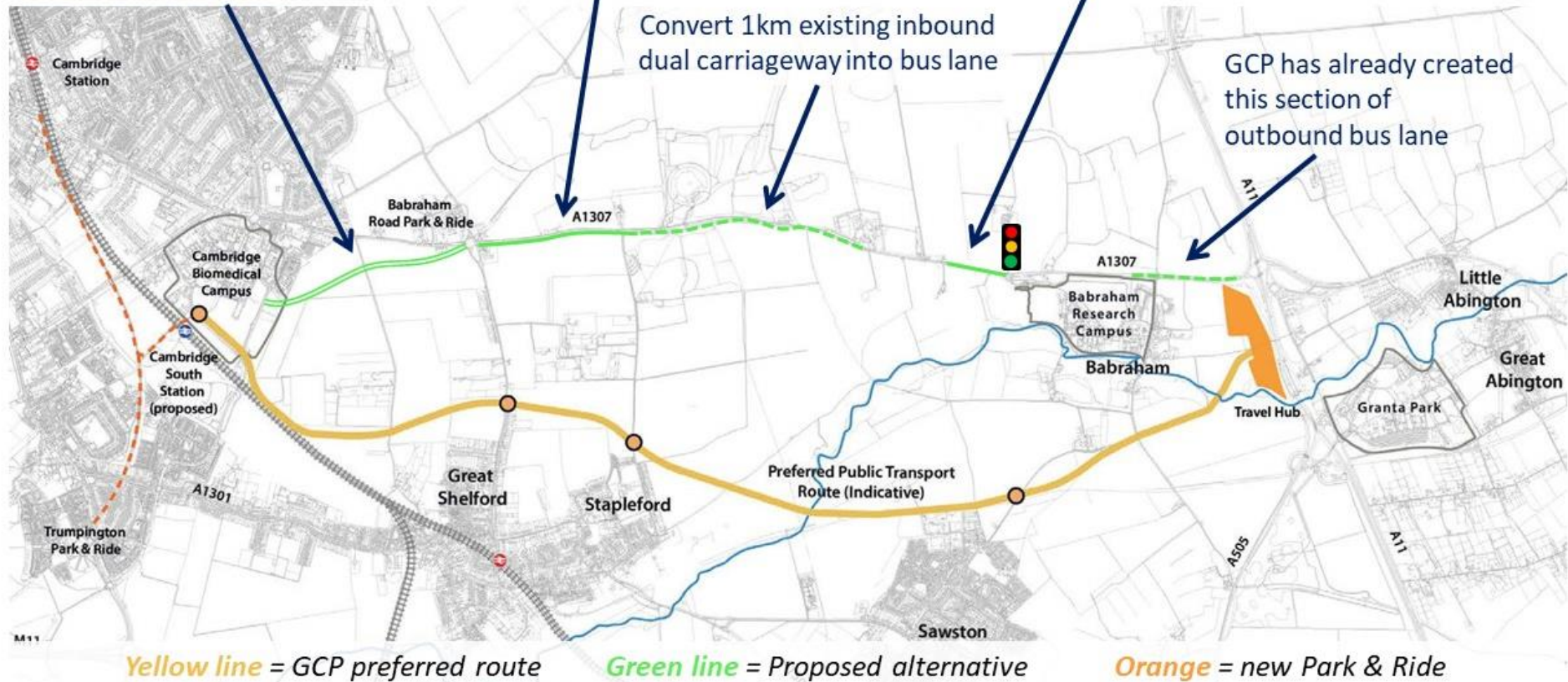
1.65km of new busway between the Cambridge Biomedical Campus and the A1307

1.1km of new inbound bus lane

Outbound bus lane and part-time traffic signals for buses to bypass queues at roundabout

Convert 1km existing inbound dual carriageway into bus lane

GCP has already created this section of outbound bus lane



What is the problem this scheme is trying to solve?

The Cambridge Biomedical Campus is growing rapidly and set to grow significantly in the next 20 years (add figures here?). This will include up to 4 hospitals. A new railway station (Cambridge South) is being built next to the Campus and is scheduled to open 2025. New employment is also being planned for the station area of central Cambridge.

Drivers to the southeast of Cambridge wishing to reach the Campus (or central Cambridge) use the A1307. On a typical weekday during morning peak, traffic on the A1307 queues from the Addenbrookes roundabout to Hinton Way roundabout (0.9 miles). At peak times, traffic is also slow from Addenbrookes roundabout to central Cambridge along Hills Road, however much of this traffic is actually going to and from places on or adjacent to Hills Road, such as The Perse School.

There is already a Park & Ride on the A1307 (Babraham Road P&R) and a significant number of workers on the Campus park here and walk/cycle to the Campus. The P&R is next to Hinton Way roundabout but at the current time drivers do not typically have to queue to reach the P&R. Buses can avoid 0.7 miles of queuing traffic on the A1307 by using Wort's Causeway (bus only) at peak times, this reduces the length that they queue in morning traffic to 0.2 miles.

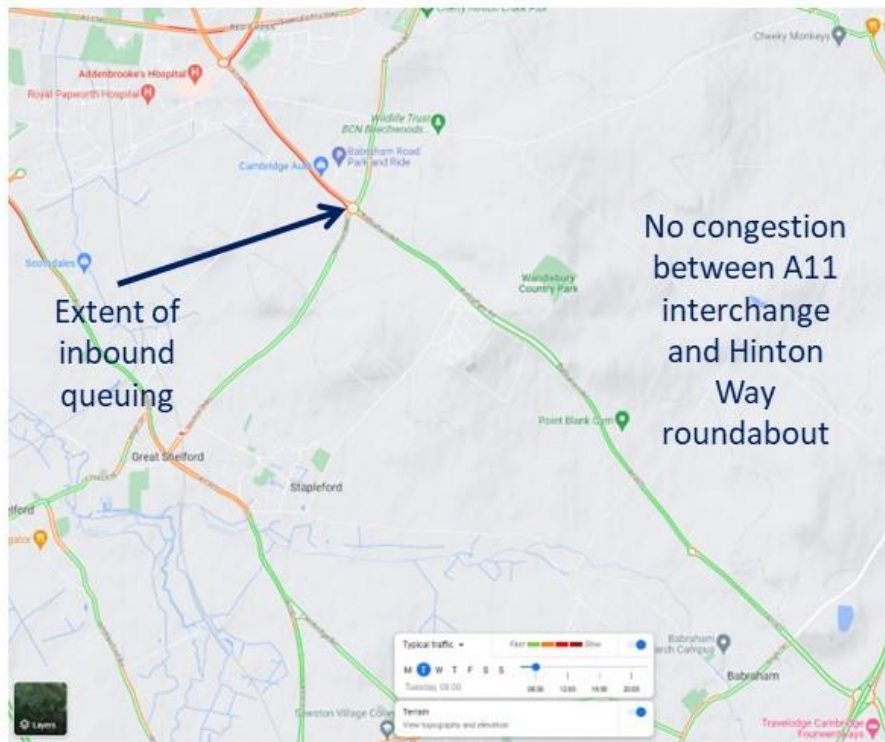
It is assumed that as more jobs are created that the amount of traffic on the A1307 will increase and this will result in drivers having to queue to reach the P&R, as well as generally leading to longer journey times.

There are not any housing schemes or future housing plans associated with the CSETS scheme.

Outside of peak hours there is minimal congestion on the A1307 into and out of Cambridge.

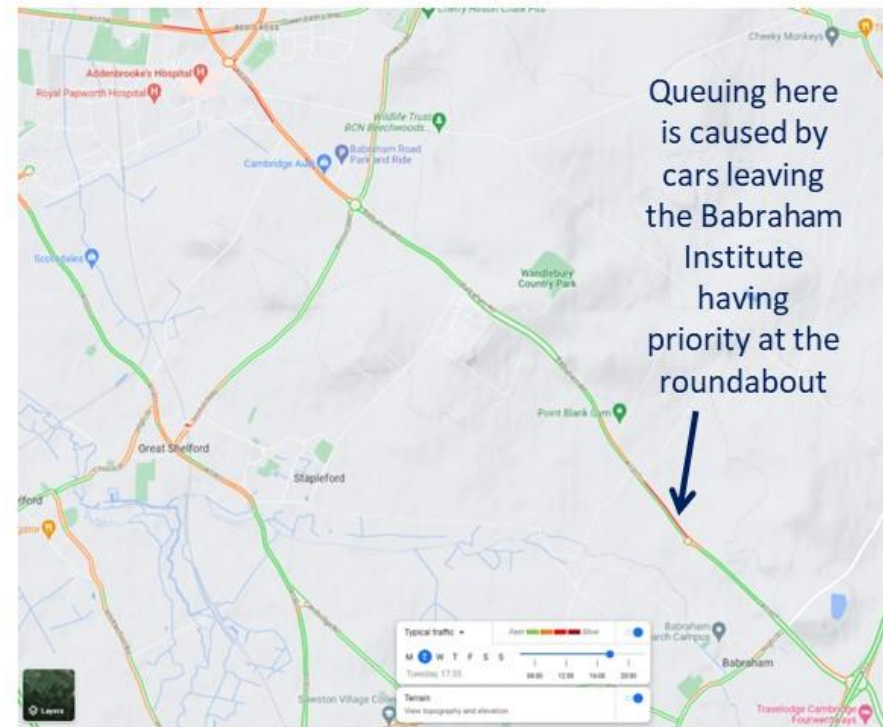
Peak **morning** congestion

(Wednesday 8:00AM)



Peak **evening** congestion

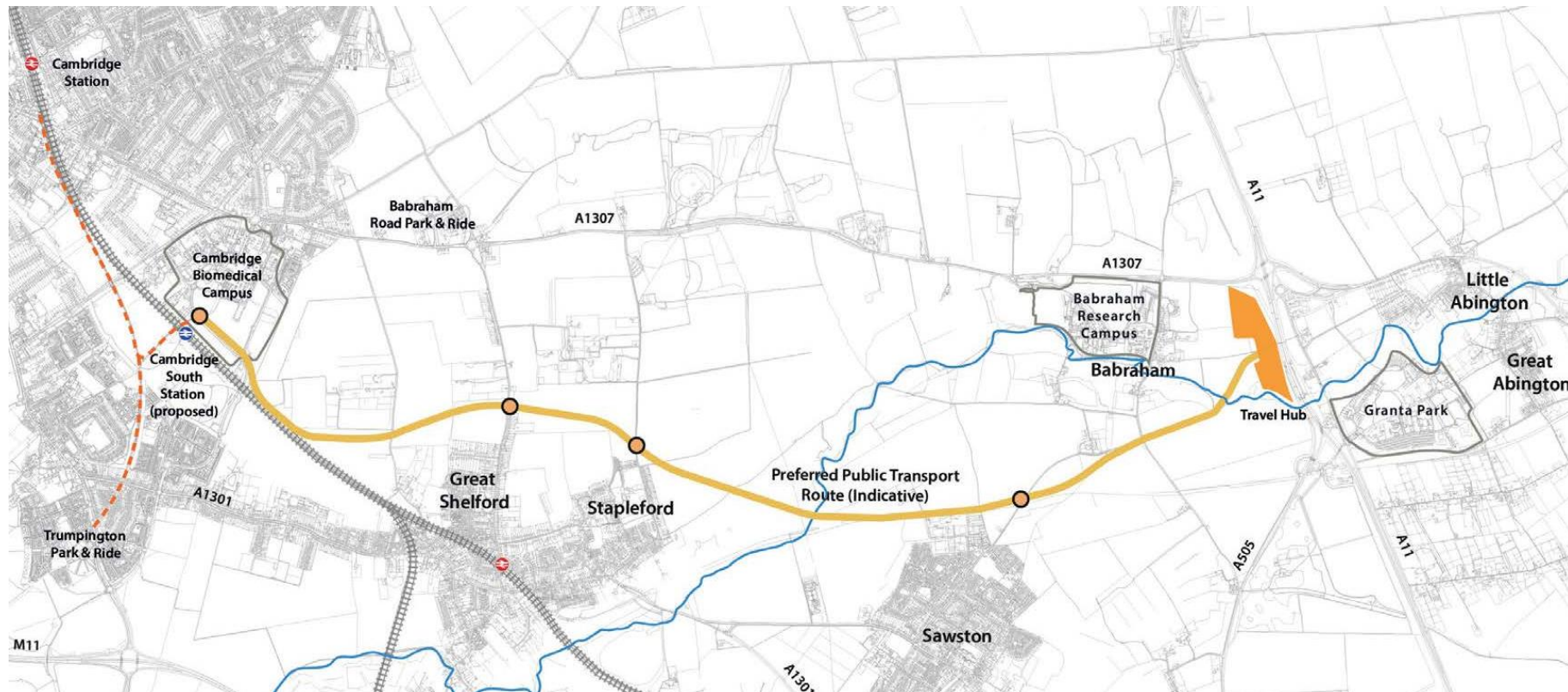
(Wednesday 5:30PM)



Source: Google Maps

What is the GCP's solution?

- Build a new and larger Park & Ride on the A1307, close to the A11 to intercept drivers going to the Campus and Cambridge. The current P&R will remain operational.
- Build 8 kms of bus road from the new P&R across fields to the western side of the Campus where it will join the existing guided busway for onward travel to Cambridge Rail Station, and from there on to central Cambridge via roads.
- 3 new bus stops at the extremities of Sawston, Stapleford and Great Shelford.
- Cost of ~£130m (estimate from 2020, assumed now to be much higher).



What will be the impact?

- 3 bridges will be built over chalk streams: the River Granta will be crossed twice and Hobson's conduit once.
- Road built over the lower slopes of the Gog Magog Hills, one of the most attractive landscapes in the Cambridge area.
- Road built through a new country park, harming public amenity.
- Urbanisation of countryside and villages through new road and associated infrastructure such as traffic lights and signage.
- Create new boundaries around the villages leaving them vulnerable to future housing development (developers have already put land forward on the basis of a busway being built) – with more loss of countryside and more roads, etc.



River Granta crossing near Babraham



River Granta crossing near Stapleford

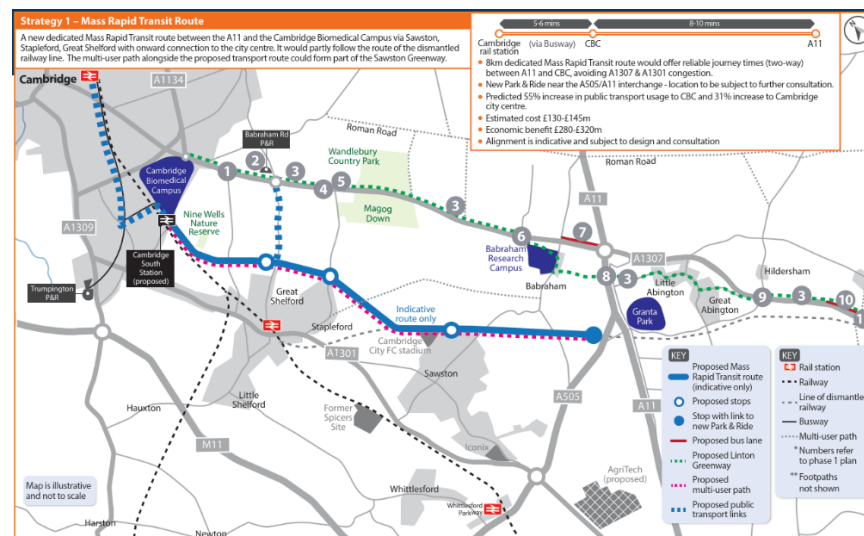
How did we get here?

Up until 2018, the GCP's preferred solution to traffic congestion on the A1307 was to develop a scheme in the A1307 corridor. They put forward a scheme for public consultation in 2018 which proposed building a 1.6km section of new bus road and 2.5km of new bus lane.

In 2017 a new layer of local government was introduced with a Mayor for Cambridgeshire & Peterborough given control over transport planning. The new Mayor, James Palmer, had plans for a Cambridge Metro and insisted that all GCP major public transport schemes were capable of becoming part of his Metro. This meant that both inbound and outbound buses had to be separated from general traffic. This meant that the option of using the A1307 corridor did not comply with the Mayor's Metro and he made it clear that he would only support the option of a new bus road through open countryside. This was a significant factor in the GCP's decision to choose that option.

In 2021 James Palmer was not re-elected and the new (and current) Mayor has dropped any plans for a Metro, but this has not led to a review of the 2018 decision to opt for an 8km bus road through open countryside.

7.1 *Strategy 1 is the only solution that presents the potential of a segregated route for mass transit that is close to population centres and with potential for future extension to Haverhill. It is the only solution that provides for delivery of the long term transport objectives of both the GCP and the Combined Authority, and **it is the only option that will have the full support of the Combined Authority.***



An Alternative using the A1307 Corridor

Cambridge South East Transport (CSET) Our alternative proposal

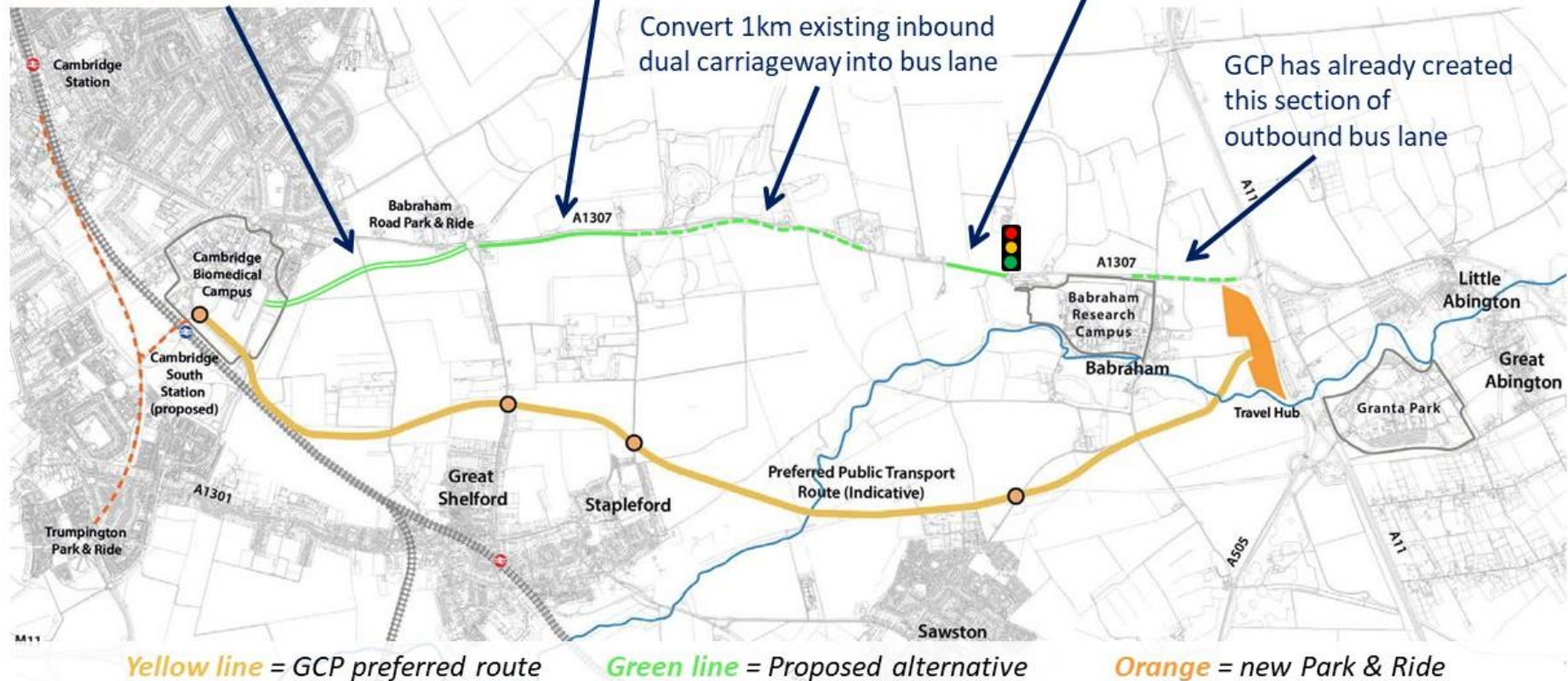
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Our alternative proposal is similar to the scheme proposed by the GCP in 2018:

- **Build a 1.65km section of bus road from Hinton Way Roundabout (or from the Babraham Road P&R) to the Campus.**

Like the GCP's proposal, our scheme would involve buses running on the Campus roads and then joining the guided busway. However because a Transport Works Order Act would not be required to build this section of bus road, that means it would not need to be restricted to guided buses, this means that it could be used by a wider range of vehicles, such as emergency services or buses that are not guided.

- **Build 1.1km inbound bus lane alongside the A1307 from Hinton Way roundabout to the dual carriageway near Wandlebury.**
- **Convert 1km of dual carriageway near Wandlebury so that one lane is for buses.**

These two measures would provide 2.1km of traffic free route for buses. Currently there is no traffic queueing on this section of road, so it would provide capacity even if traffic levels were to grow massively in future (the current queue of traffic is 1.5km, so the bus lane would provide sufficient capacity even if traffic levels doubled compared to present).

- **Introduce measures for buses to bypass traffic at the Babraham Research Campus roundabout**

A mixture of bus lanes (inbound and outbound) and traffic signals can be used so that buses bypass traffic queues at the roundabout. We note that outbound queues on the A1307 are caused by workers leaving the Campus having right of way at the roundabout, this could be solved immediately by installing part-time traffic signals.

- **Park & Ride near A11**

We believe that providing better public transport services from places such as Haverhill, Newmarket, Bury, etc is a better solution than building a giant Park & Ride because it is better for the environment. However, we recognise that additional Park & Ride would be needed in future to avoid drivers queuing to use the current P&R. There is logic in locating this close to the A11.

Unlike the GCP scheme, all the elements above can be delivered separately, giving benefit once each is completed.

What about the railway?

One option for this travel corridor is to re-open the Cambridge to Haverhill Railway, especially as there is now the possibility of rail travel to the new Cambridge South Station. It would also serve Granta Park.

A Park & Train option could be created.

It would provide faster journeys from Haverhill and encourage people from Haverhill to use public transport for all of their journey rather than driving to park and ride.

This option was discounted early in the process because of a low benefit-cost ratio and potentially long timescales.

However the benefit-cost ratio is similar to the GCP 8km bus road scheme.

Railfutures, Cambridge Connect and local MPs are pushing for the railway to be re-opened.

It is unlikely that the railway will be reopened in the short-term but it remains a possibility in the medium-long term.

However the construction of a ~£130m busway along the same route to the A11 would likely be fatal to any business plan for the railway, meaning that it would be unlikely that both schemes would be built.

Our alternative can provide a short-term solution that does not preclude the longer-term option of re-opening the railway.



Cambridge South East Transport (CSET)

Comparison of proposals

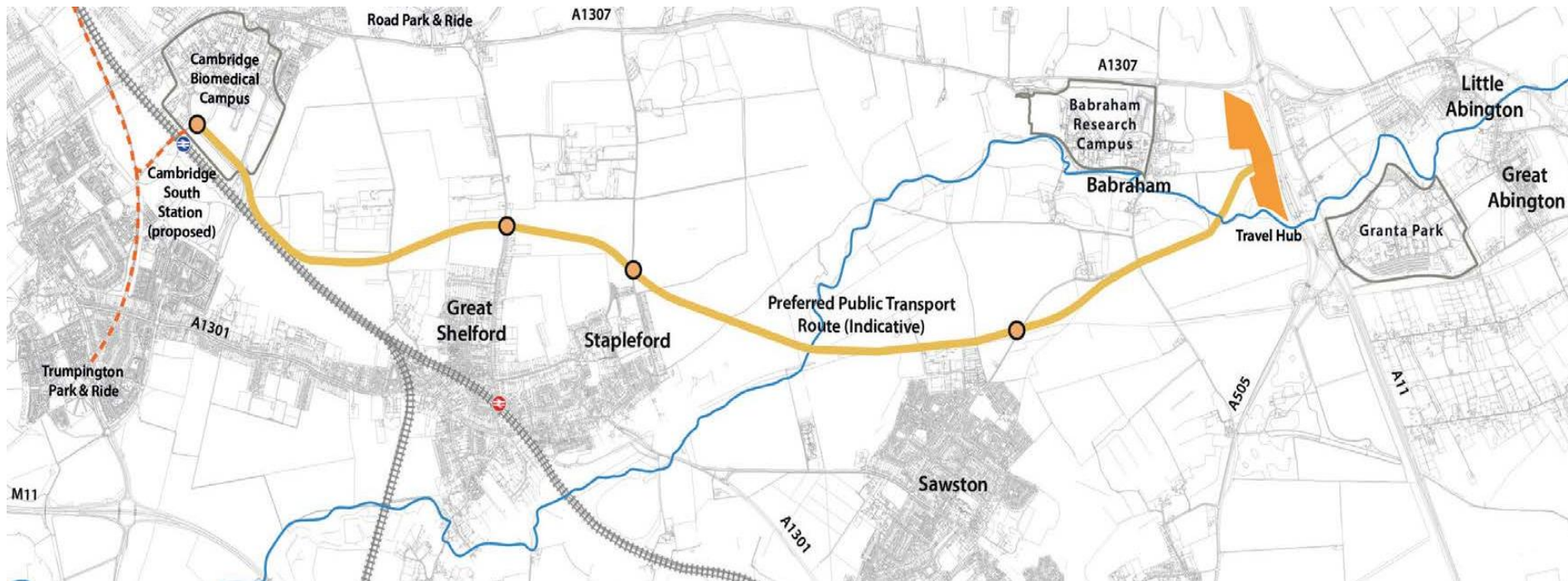
	GCP Countryside Proposal	A1307 Corridor Proposal
Journey time (A11 to CBC)	Faster and more reliable than now at peak times, slightly slower off-peak	Very similar to GCP proposal at peak times, faster off-peak
Cambridge Biomedical Campus (CBC)	Buses serve only western side of campus, and only when busway fully built	Buses serve western & south sides, including new Children's hospital
Existing Babraham Road P&R	No benefit	P&R service gains fast route to CBC & CB1
Babraham Research Park	Bus stops are up to 1 mile away	Served as now (with enhanced bus stop)
Delivery	TWAO and public inquiry add delay and uncertainty	Can be delivered in stages starting almost immediately, delivering benefits more quickly
Financial risks	Custom-designed bridges carry a high risk of cost and time overruns (c.f. Ely Southern Bypass & King's Dyke bridge)	Minimal
Technical risks	High if optically guided, low if kerb-guided	None
Cost	High (~£132m in 2020 + >25% inflation)	< £44m + >25% inflation (66% cheaper)
Benefit-Cost Ratio (value for money)	Poor	Likely to be High or Very High
Community support	Low	High

Cambridge South East Transport (CSET)

Comparison of proposals continued

	GCP Countryside Proposal	A1307 Corridor Proposal
Serves villages of Sawston, Stapleford & Great Shelford	Yes, but most residents will be a long walk from the nearest bus stop	No (continue to be served by buses along the A1301)
Other bus services	Draws passengers away from A1301 services, which run through the centres of Great Shelford & Sawston, and from Haverhill/Linton services	No impact on services along A1301
New infrastructure open to	Adapted vehicles only (i.e. with guidance)	All buses and emergency service vehicles
Countryside & green belt impacts	Through open countryside, severing land between villages and popular walking route (Stapleford Farm Track). Likely to lead to infill development in green belt.	Impacts only areas south-east of CBC (now earmarked for development in next Local Plan) and adjacent to A1307
Ecological impacts	Three crossings of chalk streams. Goes through new country park.	No crossings of rivers or country parks
Climate emergency (decarbonisation)	Significant CO ₂ in construction, especially for three concrete bridges	Much less CO ₂ in construction. Makes efficient use of existing infrastructure.
Heritage impacts	Goes through archaeological site	Not known
Haverhill–Cambridge Railway	Impedes future delivery	No impact

Does the GCP scheme serve the villages of Sawston, Stapleford and Great Shelford?



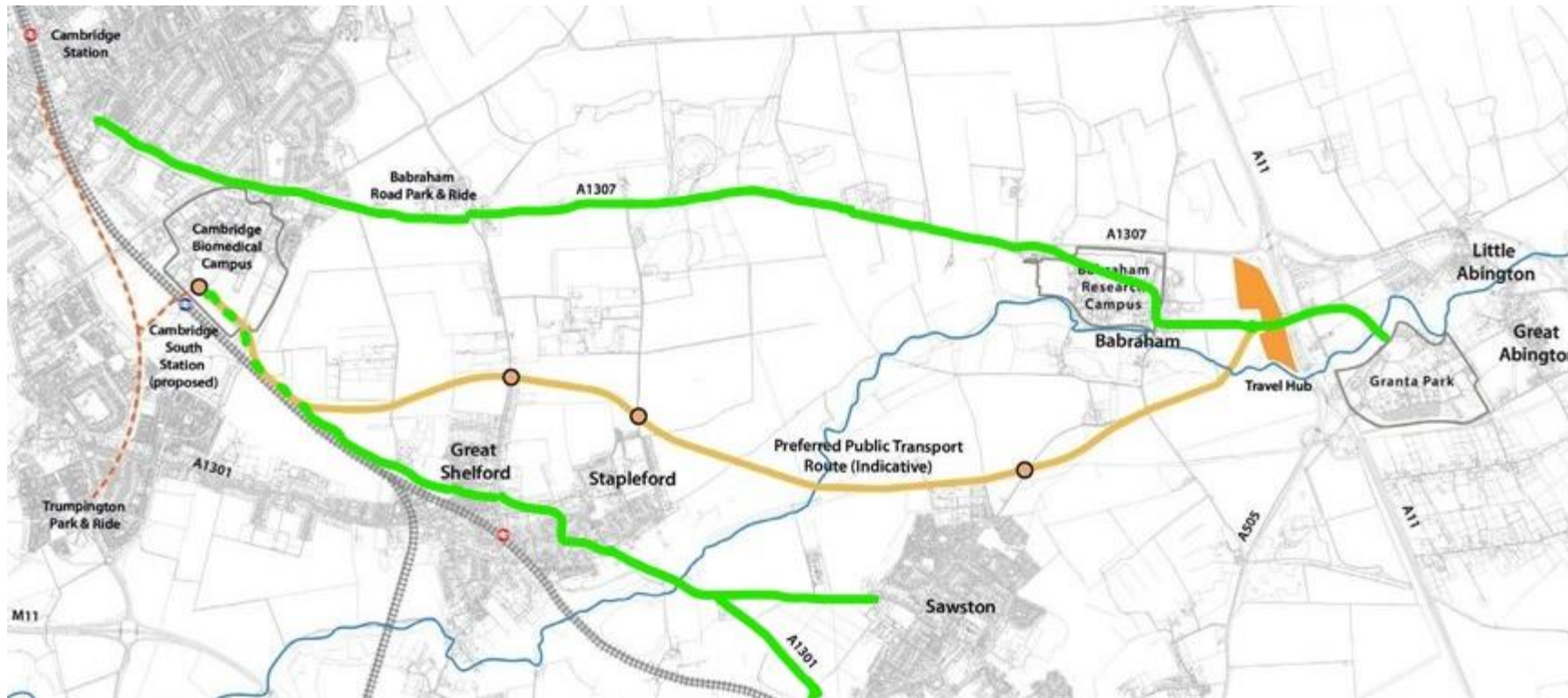
The new bus stops will only have disabled and cycle parking, with drop off for vehicles.

The proposed bus stops are at the extremity of the villages (uphill in the case of Stapleford and Great Shelford) and don't serve the centres. Given that Great Shelford and Stapleford already have a rail service, a bus service and cycle route serving the centre of the villages the new busway is only likely to provide additional benefit for a small number of people.

Similarly, those living in the centre or southwest Sawston may find it quicker to use the A1301 bus service and cycle routes than the busway when the journey to the busway is taken into account.

What about active travel (cycling, walking, etc)?

The GCP have proposed that an active travel route would be built next to the busway. However there is already an active travel route to Great Shelford and Stapleford (DNA path), there is a cycle route to Babraham and Granta Park along the A1307 (the Linton Greenway) and a greenway to Sawston is being progressed by the GCP (already approved). The GCP route will involve an uphill section whereas the Sawston Greenway is flat.



If the GCP decided in 2018 not to proceed with a scheme in the A1307, why reverse that decision now?

Several things have changed:

- No Cambridge Metro. This scheme no longer has to be separated from traffic for its entire length.
- A new expansion to the Biomedical Campus has been announced. This is next to the A1307 and would be directly served by our alternative, but is not served at all by the GCP scheme. Our alternative would also serve the eastern side of the Campus, including the new Children's Hospital, as well as the western side of the Campus. The GCP scheme only serves the western side.
- A new Country Park is to be created next to Stapleford, but the GCP bus road would go through it. This will reduce the amenity value of the new park.
- Rapid inflation means that the cost of the GCP scheme will have increased significantly, this means that other GCP schemes may not get built. The GCP is reviewing what it can afford.
- Working from home has persisted beyond the pandemic and become normalised, resulting in a reduction in traffic on the A1307.
- In 2018 it wasn't certain that Cambridge South Station would go ahead. Now it is under construction. It will influence where new workers decide to live and travel to the Biomedical Campus, meaning changes to travel patterns.
- The GCP dismissed the option of re-opening the Cambridge-Haverhill railway because of a low BCR, but the scheme they are pursuing has a similar BCR. The railway is being supported by local MPs and Railfutures.

Is it time for a rethink?

The project will cost ~£130m and have significant impacts on landscape and environment and is not supported by the local community.

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Contacts for further information

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