

**Stop B.A.D.
Response to the
South Cambridgeshire District Council
Cambridge & South Cambridgeshire Local
Plans Main Modifications - January 2018**



BOURN AIRFIELD DEVELOPMENT

16 February 2018

1 COMMENTS ON LOCAL PLAN MAIN MODIFICATIONS – JANUARY 2018

1.1 SC-MM078

The additional land added to the site proposed in Modification SCMM078 will further exacerbate the problem of ribbon development along the A428 and mean that villages will lose their character and identity.

For example, the proposal will mean that the new development will end up within 50m of Highfields Caldecote, removing its identity as a separate settlement.

In addition, recently the completion of a further 950 homes in Upper Cambourne has brought houses right up to Bourn Broadway. With the recent approval of 2350 houses in West Cambourne it means there will be a contiguous ribbon of development from Hardwick in the east right up to the Caxton Gibbet roundabout and the A1198 in the west, a distance of 8km. The villages of Highfields Caldecote, Caxton end Bourn will all be subsumed within a Greater Cambourne strip development.

Developers have repeatedly claimed that the individuality and physical separation of existing and new villages will be maintained. This has been shown to be a false. There is no physical separation between Greater, Lower and Upper Cambourne and there will, in future, be no separation between the new proposed settlement, Upper Cambourne and Hardwick. Any assurances that this is not the case are worthless.

The purpose of the Green Belt is to: prevent unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas; prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another; to safeguard the countryside from encroachment and to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns (villages). These protections should also be applied to those communities south of the A428.

It is also repeating the argument made in 1992, when Bourn Airfield was being considered as the site for Cambourne, that it was unsuitable for a settlement of such size. The Planning Inspector in 1992 submitted a report that stated the *“generally small and cramped nature of the site”*. He went on to say that, *“the Bourn Airfield proposal does lack sufficient room within its boundaries to give adequate separation (from Highfields Caldecote)”*. He thought the proposal for only 3,000 dwellings (the current proposal is for 3,500) *“would produce a tight development, which when considered in the context of the existing rural character of the area and its proximity to Highfields would appear cramped and too urban in its form and character for this rural area”*. These comments were made when Highfields Caldecote was less than half its present size and before the A428 was widened, reducing the size of the Bourn Airfield site by 10 hectares.

1.2 SC-MM084

Modification SCMM084 seeks to allow all vehicles to access the Broadway. Traffic is, as reported by a recent survey of Bourn residents, the top concern. This modification is nothing less than a betrayal to Bourn village and contradicts earlier assurances over many years that this would never happen.

Since the 1992 decision to site Cambourne at Monkfield Farm there has been an understanding that traffic on to The Broadway from any new settlement would seriously and adversely affect Bourn village. The Secretary of State for the Environment in his decision letter of the 5th March 1992 was concerned that the Great Common Farm new settlement proposal did not deal satisfactorily with the environmental implications of the increase in traffic via the Broadway and Bourn Village.

In 1996, the SCDC Planning Committee accepted this continuing risk to Bourn Village and voted against the provision of a bus access route from Cambourne to the Broadway.

Recently Bourn and Cambourne Parish Councils agreed to allow bus and emergency vehicle ONLY access to the Broadway on the strict understanding that this would NEVER change to full vehicle access. It now transpires that while SCDC were helping to facilitate this deal between Bourn and Cambourne Parish Councils - and were making assurances about no private motor vehicle access to the Broadway - they were, at the same time, negotiating on full vehicle access for northbound traffic on to the Broadway with the Bourn Airfield developers.

The ban on cars on to the Broadway must be enforced. It is the only way to protect the rural nature of The Broadway and to maintain, at least to some extent, the quality of life of the villages of Bourn and Knapwell in the face of these potentially enormous local changes.

Traffic numbers for the Broadway and the village of Bourn have increased. At peak travel times it is already seen as expeditious for vehicles from Cambourne to route through Bourn village to avoid slow traffic on routes into Cambridge or to the M11/A14 Highways.

In addition:

- A traffic survey of cars travelling through southbound through Bourn village undertaken between 0700-0900 on Monday 6th Feb 2017 counted 353 vehicles. This is already a very high number.
- The entrance to High Street, Bourn, is on a hill and is very narrow. A bus or lorry fills both lanes on this section of the road. Opposite traffic must reverse out of this section until the bus/lorry is clear

- Increases in traffic using the Broadway and Alms Hill into Bourn High Street decreases pedestrian safety at peak travel times. No safe crossing place for children or the elderly is available in Bourn village.

The modification specifies limiting access to the proposed Bourn Airfield Development to northbound traffic only. It is not possible to enforce this restriction. Cars given access to the Broadway will simply turn round and take the route that is the fastest and most convenient for the driver. Current experience suggests that many will choose to drive through Bourn to access the southbound M11 at Junction 12 to travel to the Biomedical Campus, and the other science parks and businesses south of Cambridge.

Finally, what should Bourn residents make of any assurances from SCDC or developers that northern access to the Broadway will be enforceable or will not change in future? Any such promises will simply be treated as further cynical attempts to get these plans approved.

1.3 SC-MM091

There is no justification to a modification that seeks to bring forward the development of Bourn Airfield to earlier in the Plan period. West Cambourne and other sites have received approval and much uncertainty is present regarding the provision of sustainable transport options.

South Cambridgeshire District Council have granted planning permission for over 4300 dwellings since the Waterbeach Appeal in 2014. 3,100 of these planning consents are on '5 year housing land supply sites' that are NOT in the Submission Draft South Cambridgeshire Local Plan. Why does the Bourn Airfield Development need to come forward early in the Plan period when SCDC have had a windfall of 3100 unplanned dwellings?

Plans for the Cambourne to Cambridge busway have stalled in the face of significant local opposition. In addition, the Combined Authority's review of transport options has yet to report. No conclusions have been reached on the form of the public transport that will eventually be delivered in the A428 corridor.

No solution has been proposed for the Girton Interchange to provide access to the M11 southbound for A428 traffic. Currently plans for the A14 upgrade include a new junction layout that will reduce eastbound traffic on the A428 to one lane at Girton.

No consensus has been reached regarding the most appropriate site for a park and ride on, or near, the A428.

As The National Infrastructure Commission's *Cambridge, Milton Keynes and Oxford Future Planning Options Project* concedes, '*One key lesson to learn from Cambourne..... is the need for high quality public transport options to be available from the very beginning.*' (NIC Final Report, page 79).

In short, there are too many unknowns regarding transport provision in the area. No houses should be built on Bourn Airfield until a public transport system for Cambourne to Cambridge and environs has been delivered and the Girton interchange is an all-ways junction.

2 COMMENTS ON CAMBRIDGE AND SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE LOCAL PLANS: SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL OF MAIN MODIFICATIONS APPENDIX B

2.1 Transport

HPQT

Whilst an improved bus service into Cambridge is welcome, it will do nothing to help with the majority of commuters who will be travelling to the south or north of the city or elsewhere in South Cambridgeshire. This issue is a consequence of Bourn Airfield development being in the wrong place, away from major areas of employment.

Public transport journey time to central Cambridge

Again, a majority of people are not commuting into central Cambridge.

Access – safe access to highway network and will there be available capacity?

The local plan now proposes access to all traffic to the Broadway. It suggests that this can be “northbound” only. This is unenforceable. Traffic access to the Broadway will exacerbate traffic through Bourn village making life intolerable for many residents.

Furthermore, other local traffic infrastructure is not able to absorb more traffic. Madingley Hill is currently gridlocked for much of the day and there will be no all-ways interchange at Girton, restricting access from the A428 to other routes.