GREATER CAMBRIDGE PARTNERSHIP

Growing and sharing prosperity

Delivering our City Deal

Report to: Greater Cambridge Partnership Executive Board 08 February 2018

Lead officer: Beth Durham – GCP Head of Communications

Our Big Conversation

1. Purpose

1.1. The report presents the interim findings from the Greater Cambridge Partnership's (GCP's) autumn 2017 public awareness and engagement programme 'Our Big Conversation' (OBC).

1.2. The exercise aimed to strengthen the evidence-base needed to inform the GCP's Future Investment Strategy (FIS) by generating public dialogue on the Greater Cambridge growth story, testing emerging GCP proposals with the public and undertaking a comprehensive travel survey to refresh 2011 census data.

2. Recommendation

2.1. The Executive Board is asked to:

a) To welcome the broad level of public engagement in Our Big Conversation and
b) Note initial findings ahead of the final report published as a supplement to the Future Investment Strategy (FIS) reports in March 2018.

3. Officer comment on technical issues raised at Joint Assembly

3.1. The Joint Assembly was very positive about the comprehensive nature of work undertaken in Our Big Conversation. They recognised the value of having a strong evidence base on which to draw on in the future. In addition, the Joint Assembly was keen to ensure the findings were widely shared so that it could inform a range of related work.

4. Key issues and considerations

4.1. The GCP is in the process of developing a 10 year Future Investment Strategy (FIS), looking beyond the next 'gateway review' to focus on its long term vision for economic growth in order to align its future resources accordingly.

4.2. A period of focused stakeholder engagement, under the banner 'Our Big Conversation', was undertaken between September 25 and November 30 2017.

4.3. OBC was delivered via a multi-channel marketing communications campaign targeting key GCP stakeholders including residents of Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire, employers and commuters within Greater Cambridge, elected Councillors, private and public services employees, students and school children. A consolidated report, prepared by Cambridgeshire County Council's Research Group, can be found at **Appendix A**.

4.4. The campaign used three mechanisms for recording public feedback: a) Comments generated at OBC events, paper and online OBC survey (led by the GCP Communications and Engagement Team); b) A Computer Aided Telephone Interview (CATI) travel survey of a representative sample of 1,021 Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire residents, commissioned from industry experts Systra, full report found at **Appendix B;** and c) A wider, largely self-selecting public travel survey with 200 Computer Aided Personal Interviews (CAPI) carried out door-to-door and commissioned from Travel for Cambridgeshire. Evaluation on-going. The presentation given by Systra to the Joint Assembly in January 2018 is provided at **Appendix D**. This provides the headlines from the survey report.

4.5. Census data was used to seek a representative sample of residents in the Systra survey. In the case of the Travel for Cambridgeshire travel survey, consumer insight analysis software (Acorn) was used to identify, engage and seek feedback from traditionally seldom-heard groups, for example younger households with people at the early stages of their careers (people with a stake in the future) and also people from low income households (particularly where income limited transport or travel choices).

4.6. In all, 38 public events were held, primarily at high footfall venues including supermarkets, transport hubs, hospital concourses and a Cambridge United football match. This number includes five targeted business workshops, two elected Councillor briefings, and events targeting children and young people.

4.7. The exercise created wide public awareness, generated 10,160 responses in total including 1,020 individual comments, 484 OBC survey responses and 8,656 travel survey responses. A full campaign impact evaluation report can be found at **Appendix C**.

4.8. While evaluation of the full data set remains on-going, it is anticipated that themes and key findings will remain largely the same.

5. Key findings

General

5.1 The engagement showed high levels of awareness of growth with 89.4% of OBC respondents 'aware' or 'very aware'.

5.2 Traffic congestion was ranked as the highest challenge or travel challenge at 64.6%, with associated issues of sufficient and reliable public transport (both 42%) while 67% of respondents said they were unhappy with their current housing situation; over 50% cited the cost of buying as a the key issue; 44% of Cambridge respondents also cited the cost of renting property.

5.3 In priority order, people said the following GCP investments would help them get on better in life: 1. Improved public transport (55.9%) 2. Access to housing (17.5%) 3. Smart technology solutions (8.9%) and 4. Linking training opportunities to employment (4.6%).

5.4 In general, people showed support for both immediate and long-term solutions to address these challenges. In the case of transport, there was a general acceptance that behaviour change is required alongside the introduction of new public transport infrastructure. Most of the comments received focused on the travel behaviour of particular groups and how this needed to change. In particular, people pressed for a switch out of cars and onto public transport.

Transport

5.5 OBC survey results showed strong support for the developing GCP transport strategy with 85.3% 'supporting' or 'strongly supporting' improving public transport, followed by 83.3% for improving cycling and walking and 72.9% for reducing general traffic in the city.

5.6 The residents' travel survey showed an increase in car/van use for commuting since the 2011 census in both Cambridge (32% to 37%) and South Cambridgeshire (64% to 75%). However, there was clear potential and appetite for modal shift within this group with over half (56%) saying they would like to make more journeys without their car or van – bus, minibus, coach services and cycling are identified as the most likely alternatives.

5.7 Speed and reliability were the most common reasons for car/van drivers not using alternatives at present. Only 6% of those who currently make journeys by car/van said that none of the proposed initiatives would encourage them to shift mode.

5.8 The proportion of people commuting by bicycle has also shown an increase (30% to 39%) whilst commuting by foot shows a decreased (from 16% to 5%). 62.3% of OBC respondents said that a significant increase in access to safe cycle, walking and non-motorised pathways would benefit them.

5.9 The survey results showed some clear preferences for certain incentives to encourage modal shift. The top five incentives were:

1. Introducing new public transport routes;
2. Improving reliability of public transport services;
3. Making public transport cheaper;
4. Improving the frequency of services on public transport; and
5. Introducing free parking at Park & Ride sites.

5.10 There was a clear public view that that the key to encouraging modal shift is to increase the cost of car travel and decrease the cost/time taken for other modes (most noticeably bus travel).

5.11 A range of options for managing down general traffic in the city centre, coupled with the potential to raise on-going revenue to reinvest in an improved public transport network were presented. Of these, beyond exceptionally high support for improvements to public transport, there were higher levels of support from both residents and businesses for a dynamic or "intelligent" road charging system (applied according to levels of congestion) and for pollution charging than for a Workplace Parking Levy (p. 33 Systra).

Housing

5.12 The vast majority of people now recognise the supply of affordable housing as the critical issue for the sub-region.

5.13 Respondents were concerned about the cost of housing in Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire. Some respondents commented that travelling from outside of Cambridge into the city every day was more affordable than living there (but increased pressure on the transport network). Others related how, even on above average incomes, they could not afford a home. Help to Buy schemes were mentioned and were not felt to make a home affordable.

5.14 Respondents felt there was not enough choice in housing. There were comments that houses in Cambridge centre were being sub-divided into flats. People were also concerned that the housing market was focused towards providing expensive property towards the centre of Cambridge and that this approach was changing the whole nature of the city centre.

Skills

a. A relatively small proportion of OBC respondents expressed a need for help to access skills or employment (16%).

b. For those who were seeking to access skills, the lack of courses available locally was an issue with people citing having to go to London to access some vocational courses.

c. For those looking to alternate employment, they cited an imbalance in the local labour market with jobs in the hi-tech / Bio-tech sector (and other areas of growth) not matching their own skill set.

Smart

d. Generally, people welcomed any technological solutions that would smooth the end-to- end journey – especially across different public transport services.

e. Of specific smart solutions presented for feedback, the most popular investment was shown to be in improvements to ticketing in terms of use across different forms of transport and pricing discount structures that recognised current patterns of use. There was also support for improved accuracy of real-time transport information.

f. At the same time, the challenge back was for GCP to broaden smart working to include ‘smart ideas’ and ‘smart design’ rather than simply focusing on new technology. People with disabilities that had an impact on their ability to travel wanted better (smarter) design of the public transport network. Others wanted public transport services to be better designed to match non 9-to-5 working patterns.

6. Next steps and milestones

6.1 Work to analyse the complete data set for the Travel for Cambridgeshire survey is currently on-going. As a result, the final report will be published as a supplement to the Future Investment Strategy (FIS) report in March 2018.

6.2 The data from the Our Big Conversation activities will be made available on Cambridgeshire Insight Open data website http://opendata.cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/ as part of the GCP’s commitment to make open data more widely available. This data will start to be available as the anonymization of the data is completed. This involves collating supplied personal information such as age or exact postcode into broader age group categories and postcode sectors. Free-text comments will also be filtered for any personal information.

6.3. The intelligence and information from Our Big Conversation will also be used by each of the work-streams to inform the GCP's Future Investment Strategy so that it aligns with the needs of people who live and work in the Greater Cambridge area. An example of this would be to champion the elements of design that people wanted to see within the delivery of schemes to enable better access for people with disabilities.

6.4. The large volume of both quantitative and qualitative data will be further interrogated as new schemes and projects are proposed. This is to make sure that as new schemes are proposed, the key findings will be considered as part of future development and decision making. An example of this will analysis of sub-groups within the Travel for Cambridgeshire work to clearly define the size of possible user groups (and consequently those likely to shift) for schemes.

7.0 Implications

7.1. Financial and other resources
The work was funded by Greater Cambridge Partnership through City Deal funding.

7.2. Legal

No significant legal implications have been identified at this stage.

7.3. Staffing

The work was undertaken by staff within the Greater Cambridge Partnership with consultants appointed to carry out both the CATI survey and the wider travel survey work.

7.4. Risk management

The strategic risk register is maintained for the Greater Cambridge Partnership.

7.5. Equality and diversity

Equality in considered throughout this report. There are no diversity implications in this report.

7.6. Climate change and environmental

The intelligence and information from Our Big Conversation will also be used by each of the work-streams to inform measures have the potential to reduce congestion and improve air quality in the longer term through encouraging a shift towards sustainable transport modes.

7.7. Consultation and communication

This was a period of focused stakeholder engagement as part of a widespread and continued engagement and communication process.

List of appendices

Appendix A	Our Big Conversation key findings
Appendix B	Systra Greater Cambridge Residents Travel Survey Report
Appendix C	Big Conversation campaign impact analysis