

Chairman's report of the Greater Cambridge City Deal Joint Assembly meeting held on 17 December 2015

1. General Report

We received a number of questions from members of the public which are addressed in this report under relevant agenda items. We also received one question which did not correspond to an agenda item:

Edward Leigh asked about the level of co-ordination and engagement between the City Deal and other agencies, namely Highways England and Network Rail, which had transport programmes relating to, or with the capacity to relate to City Deal objectives. Officers confirmed that they worked closely with these strategic partners and many of the issues arising were captured in the County Council's long term strategy for the area, from which most of the City Deal projects were drawn. The remits of these national partners required them to build their own business cases recognising broader dynamics than the more local focus of the City Deal; although, with input, these had capacity to deliver on both agendas, as was indicated by Network Rail's current improvement programme.

Officers agreed with a suggestion that they provide and circulate an 'engagement map', assisting an understanding of the type of engagement that was taking place along the lines described and on what subjects.

2. Recommendations on reports to the Board

2(a) Opportunities for Public Realm and Green Landscaping enhancement within City Deal Delivery

We then received a presentation from Glenn Richardson, Urban Design and Conservation Manager at Cambridge City Council, and Andrew Cameron, Director of Urban Design at WSP Parsons Brinckerhoff consultancy on opportunities for public realm and landscaping enhancement within City Deal delivery.

Points made in the presentation included:

- The role of public thoroughfares both as facilitators of movement ("roads") and as definers of place and creators of communities ("streets")
- Trees and greenery and ease of crossing contribute to the values of place and community
- Attractive examples exist of combinations of a high quality public realm and enhanced infrastructure to support more sustainable modes of travel and a number of these were shown
- Constrained space will provoke trade-offs to be made as well as challenge creativity; some of these were illustrated in relation to the Milton Road proposals
- Options need to respond to context

The presentation generated much further discussion and there was a consensus that the perspectives that had been shared would assist a positive public discussion of the proposals in relation to Milton Road, Histon Road and Madingley Road.

Assembly members drew out further points as follows:

- The wide range of benefits coming from the inclusion of trees and greenery in streets, including slowing of traffic, pride and identity with an area and improvements in property value, retail base, mental health, air quality and surface water drainage
- The potential for cycle paths in parallel streets dependent on context
- The need to examine all factors associated with tidal bus routes before concluding that they could form a viable part of any trade-off
- It was natural for different user groups to have different views as to what the priority should be for a scheme, and this called for balance and compromise in decision making.

Three public questions were received related to this agenda item.

Mike Sargeant asked for reassurance that ideas and concerns expressed in relation to the Milton Road scheme would be listened to and that the forthcoming consultation on it would be meaningful. He also asked why the loss of trees and grass verges had not been included in the consultation documentation and sought reassurance that keeping a green, residential character to Milton Road was a priority. Officers emphasised that the schemes currently out for consultation were at a first, conceptual stage of consultation. The responses would be reported back to the Assembly and the Board and taken into account when framing more detailed proposals for further consultation. It was also pointed out that the City Deal was criticised in some quarters for the time taken in the successive rounds of consultation that it planned; it would certainly not be undertaking these if it was not serious about wanting to hear people's views.

Wendy Blythe asked how potential loss of grass verges, trees, gardens and nature and the public health impact of arterial road schemes would be assessed. Officers said that when the initial consultation had identified all the issues, they would be examining how best to address them. It was too early to evaluate the public health implications, as no specific scheme had yet been proposed; health and environmental issues would be among the factors assessed in the preparation of a business case when that stage came.

Nichola Harrison proposed that the City Deal should adopt an Environmental Design Code for its transport schemes, of the kind that had been successfully employed in the context of the development of new communities in the area, utilising landscaping and public realm experts. She saw this as a means of ensuring that environmental considerations were not simply an optional extra but were at the centre of proposals for highway projects: not only protecting what existed, but improving it. Officers suggested that a Design Guide setting out parameters may be more appropriate and useful for members of the Assembly and Board as a basis for their decision making as schemes were developed. This approach was supported by the Assembly and is included in our recommendations below.

The Assembly:

(1) NOTED the presentation

(2) AGREED that officers be requested to identify what could be included in an Environmental Design Guide for City Deal transport infrastructure schemes, setting out what such a guide could consist of, together with the estimated cost and officer time associated with developing the document

2(b) Tackling Congestion: Call for Evidence

We received three public questions relating to this item.

Penny Heath asked why the criteria proposed by officers for evaluating ideas to regulate demand for road space did not include environmental impact, including pollution, character, conservation and landscape. In the discussion that followed, the Assembly resolved unanimously to recommend to the Board that a criterion to assess environmental impact and design be added to the other criteria.

Lynn Hieatt asked what steps were envisaged for further public debate and consultation on parking controls and congestion charging, ideas which has arisen through the Call for Evidence. Graham Hughes responded that the proposals received through the Call for Evidence would be assessed by the consultants, with the outcomes being reported in June 2016 enabling a more informed public debate.

Robin Pellew commended the recent Call for Evidence and sought assurances that resources would be available to build on it, through the engagement of consultants to prepare detailed proposals for public consultation. He asked how the ideas arising from the Call for Evidence could be brought to bear on the radial route proposals being consulted on in respect of the A428 corridor, Histon Road and Milton Road, which might come to a head beforehand. He felt that some of the ideas suggested alternative approaches. In response officers confirmed that consultants had been commissioned to assess the Call for Evidence options and that their report would be submitted in June 2016. Graham Hughes said that if the conclusions were pertinent to the radial route projects, there would be sufficient fluidity to weave this in, as the radial projects would not be cast in stone by the summer.

In general discussion of this item, Assembly members were invited to share their early reactions and learnings from what they had heard through the Call for Evidence about its original focus – on demand management and fiscal measures. A number did not wish to do so at this stage, but a range of points were made individually by others:

- A note of concern that additional costs imposed on businesses might work in contradiction to other aims of the City Deal for the economic wellbeing of the area
- A view that if a form of road pricing was to be taken further, the question of fairness between those living within the city and those travelling into it from outside would need to be addressed
- A judgement that although not enough information was available at this stage to form a final view, it was important to take sensible decisions at an early stage to avoid wasting time on ideas that were not realistic
- Congestion charging did not have to be the same model used in London and could for example be applied for peak times in the mornings and evenings
- The income from a congestion charge would enable the City Deal to provide much better quality and frequency of public transport, both in the city and beyond
- There is interest within Cambridge for further parking controls to be examined
- If it was possible to make it clear that the revenue gained from road pricing or a congestion charge would be used to subsidise buses, then people would be open minded about it, as it would seem less like a penalty from an overall perspective

- The idea that any congestion charge should be applied to cyclists was generally not supported by members
- A tax on tourist coaches or buses coming into the city could provide a significant revenue stream
- There are significant practical problems with introducing a system such as gating or queue redistribution which would need considering.

Officers were asked to clarify whether demand management was part of the City Deal strategy, as the Executive Board had been silent on the matter. Graham Hughes confirmed that demand management had been part of the County Council's strategies for ten years and was part of the current long-term Transport Strategy; it was also part of the City Deal strategy and had featured in the original pitches to government. He stated that there was overwhelming evidence from around the world that a strategy based solely on demand management or solely on the provision of alternatives did not work and that a successful programme for the City Deal had to consist of both in order to alleviate Cambridge's congestion problems. The situation as he saw it was that the City Deal had not yet approved a particular approach to demand management and this would be assessed as part of the Call for Evidence process.

The assembly approved the recommendations with the addition highlighted below for the addition of an environmental criterion for the assessment of options arising from the Call for Evidence:

The Joint Assembly recommended to the Executive Board that it:

- (1) **NOTES** the summary of evidence received and the emerging key themes.
- (2) **AGREES** the criteria for assessment of the ideas and proposals submitted to reduce congestion by reducing traffic volumes, managing traffic differently or managing access as part of the Cambridge Access Study, including any further ideas submitted by 31 December 2015, ***subject to the inclusion of an additional criterion to assess environmental impact and design.***
- (3) **NOTES** that the work referred to in resolution (2) above will be brought back to the Executive Board on ***16 June 2016***, including an assessment of impacts of potential City centre measures on other elements of the City Deal programme.
- (4) **AGREES** that where proposals relate to additional infrastructure that would be better considered as part of either an existing or future corridor study (i.e. one of the tranche 1 or prospective future City Deal schemes), that those proposals are taken forward through those routes rather than through the Cambridge Access Study.

2(c) Workstream update

This was noted

2(d) Greater Cambridge City Deal Forward Plan

This was noted