

Questions to Greater Cambridge Partnership Joint Assembly - 19 July 2017

Questions under Agenda Item 9: Milton Road Bus Priority

Question 9a: from Erica McDonald

I have followed the progress of the City Deal and despair that it is devised by people who do not walk or cycle in this area. This un-needed road expansion will further divide the communities of Chesterton and Arbury. Most local journeys into town or to CB1 are by foot or bike across Milton Road and the river and across the various commons.

What guarantee do we have that the plans will take into account the many requests already made for refuges and crossings at pedestrian desire lines, not at road junctions, and for safe crossings for cyclists who also mainly travel north-south into town?

Has any member of the City Deal actually stood and observed what foot and bike movements are in this area?

Question 9b: from Nick Flynn

Over the last two years 116 new homes have been built on Lilywhite Drive (on the site of the former Cambridge City Football Ground) or Westbrook Drive. The junction with Milton Road at Westbrook Drive is the only access point to their homes for these 116 families, so it is vital that residents can safely leave and access Westbrook Drive when travelling in either direction along Milton Road.

The 'Do Optimum' plans included an excellent crossing by Westbrook Drive to allow residents to safely access the south bound cycle lane, but this has unfortunately been removed in the Final Concept. How are residents in Lilywhite Drive and Westbrook Drive supposed to safely access the south bound cycle lane, without having to cross three lanes of traffic? Will officers reinstate this crossing?

Question 9c: from Lilian Runblad

In a letter to Councillors Lewis Herbert and Roger Hickford on June 28th 2017, I expressed deep concern that the Histon Road LLF Resolutions adopted on January 30th 2017 had not yet appeared on the official website for the GC City Deal/Partnership (see attachment). No reply has been received to the letter and the Resolutions and Appendices have still not been published.

The Joint Assembly has earlier questioned why full documentation has not been available in time for their meetings. In this case they may not even be aware that the Histon Road LLF Resolutions and Appendices exist and that they are the result of the hard work undertaken by the residents, associations, schools, small businesses, cycle groups, etc. which in some cases has produced alternative and preferable solutions to those of the officers and consultants. Their contribution should be appreciated and respected. The Chair of Histon Road LLF has several times reminded and urged the officers and staff to publish the documentation.

My question is therefore: Why were the Histon Road LLF Resolutions and Appendices not published at the time they were adopted, together with the draft minutes of the January 30th LLF meeting, as in similar instances? I would like to have the answer in writing. I have a copy of the Resolution documents with me to gladly hand over to the Chair of the Joint Assembly meeting today.

Question 9d: from Daphne Lott

When is the City centre access study going to yield some results and a concrete plan of action – particularly regarding traffic management?

Without that how can Officers, residents and the Board make informed decisions which reflect on the development of Milton Road?

Drummer Street cannot cope with any more buses. The Final Concept plans still aim to increase the number of buses per hour along Milton Road without a clear idea of their final destination and how they will be accommodated

Question 9e: from Roxanne de Beaux on behalf of Camcycle

Members of the Joint Assembly,

The 'Final Concept' design in the officer's report is based upon the Paramics modelling software that does not have the capability to model people walking and cycling, it only handles motor vehicles. We find this greatly concerning because observations show that people walking and cycling make up over a third of all the people present on Milton Road during the peak hour, and perhaps even more during the rest of the day. Furthermore, the extensive bus lanes in the 'Final Concept' report lead to narrow verges leaving no space for safe bus stops, loading bays, or decently sized trees. This means that, if the 'Final Concept' is built, the bus stops would force passengers to load and unload from the busy cycleway, causing a type of conflict that Camcycle have greatly sought to prevent by design in all new road schemes. And delivery vans will park upon what little grass verge there is and also encroach onto the cycleway. These two problems will lead to people being unable to ride safely in the cycleway and therefore be forced into the carriageway and the bus lanes with no other choice. Then the already limited validity of the Paramics modelling results will completely break down as people cycling are forced in greater numbers to be mixed in with cars and buses.

What is the justification for extensive use of bus lanes given such flaws in the evidence and methodology?

Question 9f: from Anne Hamill

My question concerns adhering to the commitment made in Cllr Lewis Herbert's letter of 14 September 2016, stating that the Board supports "...an avenue of mature trees as a core design element along Milton Road, and also the provision of grass verges...".

Yet in the 'Final Concept' this is not followed through. Appendix D, page 1, shows a partial, vestigial verge on the Herbert Street side of the road, which is too narrow for tree planting, and this is at avariance with the commitment made in the letter. Based on this commitment – as a crucial part of the remodelling of the road – residents envision a continuous avenue of

trees on both sides along the whole length of the road, while accepting that there must be access to the shops at Mitcham's Corner and close to Arbury Road.

The challenge is that the width of Milton Road varies along its length. At its narrowest, by Herbert Street, it's about 17.5m wide, whereas the widest section measures about 21m (see Appendix E, page 4). So, to achieve an outcome that includes trees within verges along the whole length, it will be necessary to vary the widths of pavements and cycleways locally, as well as minimise the length of bus lanes – to ensure enough space for adequate verges with trees, too. If necessary, planting trees with a columnar rather than spreading habit could be an option.

Another relevant factor is that verges need to be deep enough for bus stop 'platforms' where passengers wait to fit in between trees, with the minimum depth being 2.5 metres.

So, my question is: Will the joint Assembly commit to supporting flexibility in determining the widths of the pavements and cycleways, and the length of the bus lanes, to achieve full-length healthy verges planted with mature trees?

Question 9g: from Gerry Rose

See attached PDF on Gilbert Road

Preamble: It seems that there is insufficient space to meet everyone's requirements. There is a trade-off between commuter convenience, pedestrian and cyclist safety, and environmental beauty. In all of these, it is generally agreed that **safety must come first**.

From Diagrams (I) and (II) it is clearly evident that if one adds in the vehicle wing mirrors, then 3m-wide lands would **not be wide enough** to support 3 vehicles of bus-width passing alongside each other. To avoid an accident there is a danger in Diagram (II) of a bus veering into the cycle lane (easily mounting the curb) and fatally injuring a cyclist, or forcing a cyclist to veer into pedestrian walkway and injuring a pedestrian.

Observation: A tree/verge barrier as in Diagram (I) separating traffic from cyclists is **essential for the safety** of both cyclists and pedestrians.

QUESTION: What measure are being priorities to ensure the safety of cyclists and pedestrians?

If it is decided that the road-space is inadequate to support 3 motorised lanes, will the design team either:

- **REMOVE** the bus lane from the design

OR

- **RESTRICT THE WIDTH** of vehicles using Milton Road, effectively banning use by wide lorries.

Question 9h: from Richard Taylor

1. Would the assembly please consider recommending that the safety assessments for transport project designs get regularly published and used to inform the board and assembly's deliberations?

I expect if detailed safety assessments of, for example, the Milton Road and the Green End Road proposals had been presented showing the expected impact on injuries and deaths the recommendations could well have been different

Question 9i: from Matthew Danish

See attached pdf

The 'Do Optimum' proposal I helped develop contains safe footways and cycleways, protected by an avenue of trees and verges with ample space for good bus stops.

But the officer's 'Final Concept' scheme is predicted by the computer model to be a major improvement in all motor vehicle journey times, even more so in 2031, over both 'Do Nothing' and 'Do Optimum'. It predicts every junction will have shorter queues.

Quote from the report:

"The 2016 AM Peak 'Final Concept' bus reliability results shows improved bus reliability for both directions of travel, maintaining average bus journey times inbound (even with a reduction of bus lanes on this side of the road in comparison to 'Do Nothing')"

The report says that bus lane length reduction is compatible with improved bus journeys.

The predicted bus improvements seem to have little to do with bus lanes and almost all to do with the clever designs for the major junctions. Shorter queues at junctions mean that bus lanes don't do much. And all this while bus priority refinements to junctions have yet to be added.

I have a compromise proposal. Please amend Milton Road recommendation (c) to:

"Take the 'Do Optimum' design as provided by the Local Liaison Forum resolutions; with its lesser length of bus lane; with its trees, verges and good bus stops; with its attractive walking and cycling facilities; and apply the following modification: that the major junction designs from 'Final Concept' are incorporated in place of the 'Do Optimum' junction designs where there is an improvement. Agree this new 'Final Optimum' hybrid conceptual design as a basis for detailed design work and the preparation of an interim business case to facilitate further public and statutory consultation."

Although officers have said they will consider reducing the bus lane length from 'Final Concept', that promise is too weak. The process should instead be designed to meet the objectives with no more bus lane than strictly necessary.

Bus lanes are a heavy-handed measure that obviate themselves if successful. You are in danger of building a 20th-century-style white elephant. In contrast, bus priority via smart junction design doesn't suffer from that problem, and is a distinctly modern approach that leaves room for good trees, verges, bus stops, cycleways and footways.

Instead of a strip of tarmac, your legacy would be a world-class street that works for everyone, one which you are proud to show to the next generation.

Will the Assembly agree to propose to the Executive Board an amendment to recommendation (c) as described here creating the 'Final Optimum' hybrid conceptual design?

Question 9j: from Michael Page

I am interested in understanding what constitutes success for the Milton Road project.

I imagine that for the transport delivery team it means completing the engineering works to specification, on time and on budget – all of which can be measured and evaluated.

But what does success mean for the GCP/City Deal Board and the citizens of Cambridge?

The project needs to deliver outcomes that we can all understand and that can be measured.

It seems to me that one such measurable outcome could be modal shift. It should be possible to monitor the proportion of journeys made along Milton Road by people in motor cars, on buses, on cycles and on foot. In that way we could judge over time how successful the scheme had been in encouraging the change to more sustainable modes of transport.

Question: Does GCP/City Deal have plans in place to carry out such monitoring and will targets of achievement be set so that we can all judge the value of the project after its completion?

Question 9k: from Richard Cushing

'A considerable number of graphs, tables and words have been produced by consultants and officers regarding the proposals for Milton Road. I find the combination to be confusing, and in attempting to understand them went back to basics, firstly to try to establish what the situation is at the moment. I failed. I was not able to find published information against which the Milton Road project has been designed.

Milton Road is seen as a 'corridor' to traffic planners, but the road and surrounding area are 'home' to hundreds of families. My children attended local schools. Around the corner are a variety of shops which serve both residents and commuters: the area is to us like a village high street.

Information has only been produced for 'peak hours', generally 8:00 – 9:00am, and 5:00 – 6:00pm on just five days of the week: ten hours per week in total. Although some of the proposals may cut a minute or two off peak-time bus journeys for commuters, this is apparently at the expense of increasing queuing during the rest of the day. Queuing of course brings pollution – a major cause of premature death in this country.

The reports are confused by presenting information differently at different stages of the project, and more recently by the removal from public access of relevant documents, following the change of website from Greater Cambridge City Deal to Greater Cambridge Partnership.

Against this background, I would like to ask the Assembly to require, and to recommend to the Board that it also require, that all reports of this nature should publish, with sources, the following up-to-date information for the route in question:

1 – The origin and destination at hourly intervals of people who travel along the route (in this case Milton Road).

2 – Present measured journey times correlated with modelled journey times *throughout the day* and for all days of the week, for buses, general vehicles, cycles, and walkers.

3 – An indication of pollution levels presently and according to the model.

Any proposed project should then carry a prediction of the immediate effect of implementing the changes, together with the prediction of the effect in 2031.'

Question 9l: from Maureen Mace

See attached pdf

Watching the recording from the first GCP meeting, I was delighted to hear that an ANPR survey has taken place. However, I understand a cycling and walking survey has not been undertaken. Soon 280,000 residents of the South Cambridgeshire area will be asked to complete a form of travel diary but surely direct evidence is better than a series of questions which many will not return?

To try and understand all the different forms of transport flowing along Milton Road, Matt Danish and I undertook 2 surveys. One, counting cyclists on 21 June between Arbury Road and Highworth Avenue and another the following day at a point between Kendal Way and Woodhead Drive.

At the first survey we counted 534 cyclists and 185 pedestrians between 8-9am which is generally believed to be the busiest time of the day. The total of 719 using a non-motorised method of transport far exceeded any guess I made beforehand.

On 22 June we set up a video on Milton Road close to the toucan crossing between Kings Hedges and Arbury Road. There was a combined total of 507 cyclists and pedestrians here, more than half the total of 955 motorised vehicles.

The attached video evidence and counts have been sent to the Assembly prior to today's meeting to ensure they have been read.

The GCP want to understand what the issues are about transport. ANPR is just about motorised vehicles and doesn't include the experience of cyclists and pedestrians. For a truly evidence based study of what is actually happening, is the GCP prepared to adopt the method of video-based evidence and to make a truly proper analysis which is informed to provide really safe cycle use and walking?

Question 9m: from Barbara Taylor

At the 13 June LLF meeting the Interim Director of Transport stated "people will not get out of their cars just to sit in a bus in the same queue of traffic. They prefer to drive past the Park&Ride and get started down Milton Road to avoid the time lost by parking up, paying and waiting for the bus to arrive. That's why we're putting in bus-lanes to encourage people to see that buses are faster and more reliable than sitting in a car."

But the traveller's preference for car use over buses is due to other factors as well – such as cost, convenience, multiple destinations, and flexibility to return from the city late in the evening when P&R buses aren't running. Building bus-lanes won't have any impact on these factors, and any time savings made on the Milton Road segment of the journey is not guaranteed to compensate for the cost currently charged by bus operators and for P&R fees.

So my question is:

“Has City Deal carried out any research with car drivers and bus users to assess what motivates their travel choices and what incentives might be needed to effect a shift to public transport or cycling and walking, before deciding to build more bus-lanes on Milton Road?”

Questions under Agenda Item 11: A428/A1303 Better Bus Journeys Scheme

Question 11a: from Carolyn Postgate

1. Given the prevailing North West wind and the location of Crome Lea, does a P&R site at Crome Lea not have the potential to be more damaging to the SSSI wood and on that basis should it not have a higher negative mark than Site 2 under the Biodiversity heading?
2. Can the officers explain why Crome Lea and the Waterworks have lost a negative mark for engineering issues (impact on local road during construction) when all four sites around the Madingley Mulch roundabout would have a similar impact on the road during construction of any park and ride site at that location?
3. I also note that the report states that Crome Lea has overhead for future expansion. Given that last September the Officers agreed that it should be reduced to its current size so as not to impose on Coton village, where would it expand to?
4. Given that so much weight was applied to size in the last selection process that identified Crome Lea as the preferred site, why has size not been used as a criterion in the Park and Ride Study, especially as future proofing should be at the helm of the Partnership's thinking?

Questions under Agenda Item 14: Improving Greater Cambridgeshire Partnership Governance

Question 14a: from Richard Taylor

Does the assembly consider the organisation's governance arrangements enable board members to effectively wield the reins of power in a public and accountable manner?

I am concerned that significant decisions appear to have been taken within the Greater Cambridge Partnership organisation between cycles of board and assembly meetings. I was surprised the large Cambridge area traffic survey took place without the board and assembly considering the effectiveness of the proposed survey technique and its impact on privacy. The organisation even appears to have been renamed and relaunched between cycles of the formal meetings in public. The Green End Road scheme appears to me to have been changed after the board's approval of a plan in a manner exceeding the board's delegation of powers. If major decisions are taken between formal public meetings of the board they should at least be reported to the next board meeting.

Question 14b: from Wendy Blythe (Chair of FeCRA) and Bev Edwards (Chair of Barton Parish Council)

See three pdf documents

Will the Assembly today agree a resolution that residents will be represented on the Board and Assembly and involved in all future projects from inception as equal partners and that they will be involved as equal partners in taking forward existing projects, and that you will recommend that the Executive Board takes steps to implement the proposals we have made?

Questions not being taken at this meeting (recommended to chair as such – to be confirmed)

Question from Dr Richard Baird

Thank you for your work on planning for Milton Road.

I local resident who cycles on a daily basis with children to Milton Road primary school and other local destinations. I am strongly in support of the 'Do Optimum' solution proposed by the Milton Road Alliance.

I think this is likely to be safer, greener and will encourage more walking and cycling when people travel.

Can this please be the option we go for?

Question from Hilary J Goy

There is heavy emphasis on facilitating bus journeys to the detriment of other provision. However, what evidence is there that there will be either an increase in passengers or provision of buses to justify this, given that Cambridge North Station will provide an alternative route to the city centre and outward journeys from there?