

Questions to Greater Cambridge Partnership Executive Board

- 20 September 2017

Questions under Agenda Item 6: Cambourne to Cambridge Better Bus Journeys Scheme

Question 6a from Kathy York

"With reference to Option 1, we note that a 4.25m bus lane has been drawn which is within the highway boundary. There are pinch points on the section of the Madingley Road from the West Cambridge site to Lady Margaret Road where it would be impossible to accommodate designated cycle lanes as well as a bus lane. We have been very concerned by the current volume of bikes, and this is now due to increase significantly due to the 12,000 bike racks at Eddington. The Ridgeway trail from Eddington to Storeys Way will also contribute to a vastly increased volume of cycle traffic. My question is: without considerable land take (ie residents' gardens), how can Madingley Road accommodate rapid bus transport and cycle lanes?"

Question 6b from Chris Pratten

Given that

- o A route across the West Fields is unlikely to be deemed "required" given the existence of routes that do not cross the West Fields green belt.

- o In the view of LDA in Appendix L1c, the routes across the West Fields are very likely to be considered "inappropriate".

The GCP will therefore need to demonstrate "very special circumstances" for any of the more destructive routes to be chosen. It seems unlikely that such circumstances can be demonstrated in the light of the other available options.

Will the board instruct officers to further restrict the set of consulted routes to the east of the M11 to routes that are identified as appropriate in the LDA report?

Question 6c Ellen Khmelnitski

Appendix L3 indicates that the southerly route options across the West Fields, that are proposed in the board papers, would cross a section of Bin Brook that is designated as a Main River. The flood zone at this point is some 30-40m wide. A safe busway crossing at this point would involve significant damage to the environment. The route would need to rise above the landscape at this point to a level well above the current ground which is prone to flooding. The analysis of Appendix N2 restricts itself to simple engineering concerns, thus avoiding a complete and transparent description of the structure that might be required. The LDA Green Belt analysis also avoids this question, assuming that the busway fits into the rather optimistic "Green Lane Concept".

The residents of the Gough Way Estate have very significant concerns about any infrastructure that might lead to an increase in the risk of flooding to their homes. Will the Board instruct officers to ensure that consultation documents and future reports present a realistic view of what might be required at a Bin Brook crossing?

Question 6d Alistair Burford

When Officers were questioned as to why Crome Lea was not identified in the original public consultation document we were told that the original illustration "was only indicative".

The Officers have now recommended the Water Tower and Scotland Farm for public consultation. When questioned at the most recent LLF meeting about the exact size, location and any future expansion of the Water Tower site the Officers stated that the illustration “was only indicative” ... and the site was the same size as the current P&R at Trumpington.

Given that plans are in place to extend the Trumpington P&R site, if in the future it is deemed necessary to extend the Water Tower site, where will it be extended to, south down the hill adjacent to Long Road or east towards Crome Lea?

Will the Board give an undertaking that the Water Tower site will not be extended?

Will the Board also given an undertaking that both sides illustrated in the public consultation document will remain in the same location and not end up 500 yards from where we are led to believe they are?

Question 6e Dr Marilyn Treacy

The first round of consultation on the Cambourne to Cambridge busway did not conform to the Gunning Principles and this may be just one of the aspects of GCP process to be challenged at Judicial Review.

We were informed at the Joint Assembly last week that a consultation is not a referendum which is true however we were also informed that public opinion would play no part in future MCAF scoring for the preferred option of a Park and Ride site or the route to take forward for full outline business case development .

May I remind the Executive that compliance with the Gunning principles requires that a decision maker gives "conscientious consideration" to the outcome of the consultation process.

Put simply the public authority must be able to show that it has considered the outcome of the consultation process carefully and be prepared to change course in response to the outcome of consultation if appropriate.

If MCAF scoring is used and the outcome of the consultation is not fed into the scoring process then the Gunning Principles are not being upheld.

Q. If the outcome of the forthcoming consultation is going to play no part in MCAF scoring for the preferred option are we to assume that MCAF scoring will not be used? If that is so will the Executive explain at this stage what form the assessment of options will take.

Question 6f Allan Treacy

There is a clear and urgent need to deliver people to the Addenbrookes site, the Bio Medical campus and beyond and not just Grange Road where virtually nobody goes to work.

Option 6 would offer an economic, speedily implemented and efficient solution to this problem as it would permit connectivity with the M11.

So why is connectivity with the M11 not a criteria in deciding whether to adopt option 1, 3a or 6?

Question 6g Carolyn Postgate
Interim Transport Director's Report - "Madingley Mulch to Grange Road Journey Times"

The table within the report claims a difference in journey times between Option 3 & Option 6 as 5 minutes. The cost difference between the two options is in the region of £40 million tax payers money.

Is it really acceptable to spend an additional £40 million to reduce the journey time by 5 minutes when not time but reliability is of greater importance?

Whilst the Officers appear confident with their assessment of journey times and cost, the report has no mention of the frequency of buses, how many people living in the west of the City actually want to travel into Cambridge during the peak period or where the bus will go once at Grange Road, other than, to quote Graham Hughes, "It will turn left or right".

Will the Board stipulate that before going to public consultation there should be a detailed employment survey of Cambourne residents, some idea of frequency of journeys, a joined-up plan as to how buses are going to get into the City centre and more importantly a coherent plan for how buses will get commuters to the main employment centres of Addenbrooke's & Babraham in the south and the Science Park & Marshalls in the north?

Question 6h Stephen Coates

Can the Board explain why GCP officers may be distorting perception by playing potentially misleading facts into public debate over the Cambourne Cambridge busway scheme:

1. On the record comments from GCP officers wrongly claimed in the Cambridge News (1 September) that new routes sidestep the West Fields by running along the border. And in the Cambridge Independent (6 September), officers claimed new routes address concerns over "potential in-fill and building on the West Fields" by St John's College. Remaining routes still cross Grange Farm, which St John's says makes development there more sustainable.
2. GCP documents claim that a new road through the West Fields will increase biodiversity. They claim arable fields have little biodiversity value and that new planting along the busway will increase biodiversity. James Cadbury, ex Head of Research at the RSPB, has said your analysis is wrong because many declining species (of birds, animals and plants) depend on open, arable countryside and thrive on the West Fields. Skylarks, grey partridge, yellow hammers, barn owls, brown hare are examples of species that need open fields, are distinct from species that reside in woodland or urban habitats. Up to 30 buses an hour will eventually use this road creating a wildlife barrier and pollution. The busway will enable large scale housing development, leading to the loss of these precious nature habitats on the edge of our historic city.
3. The GCP claimed in the Cambridge News on 9 August that a potential bus terminus on Silver Street was only last looked at in 2015 when it was in fact looked at in Spring 2017. You have still failed to clarify how so many buses will access the City centre through Silver Street. You have also used the press to wrongly undermine the reputation of SWF.