

## **Questions to Greater Cambridge Partnership Joint Assembly - 2 November 2017**

### **Questions under Agenda Item 10: Quarterly Progress Report**

#### **Question 10a: from Mike Mason**

I refer the joint assembly to Agenda Item 10 Appendices 1 and 3. The financial reporting arrangements for GCP are unsound in that there is no public confidence in the budgeting process, financial control or value for money spent. Table 2 leads one to suspect that the figures under columns "Actual to Date", "Forecast Outturn" and "Forecast Variance" are optimistic guesswork. I ask, are the "Actual to Date" figures verifiable by means of invoices from suppliers or cross authority documented charges (e.g. LA Admin. Costs, line 8)? Are these costs clearly and unambiguously defined in the County Council public payments data? If so will GCP publish a definitive list of cost centres for all of its expenditure headings to ensure that there is a clear audit trail and public accountability? If it is accepted that the County is the "Accounting Body" then what are the arrangements for recording all income including S106 money, housing and other grants or contributions, within the County Council's comprehensive income and expenditure statement (CIES) which forms part of its audited accounts? With regard to Appendix 3, I would question whether the recommendation to use GCP funds to support revenue budget income shortfall in one of its constituent authorities is either legal, or within the spirit of the grant award by HM Government? Furthermore are Assembly Members aware that the County Council is recording the City Deal/GCP Government Grant funding of £60M, to be received in future years 3,4,and 5, as "Useable Assets" in the third version of the 2016/17 Statement of Accounts?

#### **Question 10b: from Cllr Susan van de Ven**

With a relatively modest investment, the Cambridge-Royston cycle scheme could be quickly completed, within the Greater Cambridge Partnership Tranche 1 timeframe.

I am not here to set out the detailed case for the scheme – that has already been done many times over, and the fact that it is near completion, thanks to GCP support, speaks for itself.

The question now is how to tackle the remaining Melbourn - Royston two-mile stretch, given that this geography straddles a county border. The route consists of a pedestrian/cycle path in Cambridgeshire and a pedestrian/cycle bridge beginning in Cambridgeshire and landing in Hertfordshire.

This is a shovel ready project that would deliver significant economic benefits, and make a substantial contribution to reducing reliance on the private car for travel to key areas of employment in Cambridge and along the A10 corridor. It will maximise the benefits of the investments in this route already made by GCP and others – indeed the whole will be greater than the sum of its parts. Because it has the potential to be delivered within the existing GCP funding period, it can demonstrate real progress on innovative, economically led schemes to Government.

Ideally the Melbourn-Royston link should be delivered in one go. However, the overall Cambridge-Royston scheme has been delivered in segments as funding has become

available, and this pragmatic approach has produced results. Nevertheless, any cross-border scheme demands a collaborative approach, as the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough LEP indicated last December when it pledged financial support for the project. Royston sits within the LEP's remit, unsurprisingly given Royston's Cambridge-facing business orientation.

That collaborative approach is now taking shape: four global companies that jointly employ thousands of workers in Royston and Melbourn have pledged financial support or made indicative pledges, totalling £120K. Hertfordshire County Council funded and completed the bridge feasibility study and have formally committed lifetime maintenance costs for the bridge, estimated at £580K. Last month, Royston Town Council voted unanimously to commit £30K toward bridge costs, matching the commitment made by AstraZeneca. AstraZeneca has also provided a £10K grant for vegetation maintenance along the whole of the Cambridge-Royston cycle route. The A10 Corridor Cycling Campaign, with many of its members cycling to work, has raised £1.5K in small donations toward bridge costs.

As the owner of Melbourn Science Park said to the City Deal Board last year, the A10 Cambridge- Royston cycle scheme will not only alleviate pressures on Science Park parking, which is at capacity, but it will allow the Science Park to create more jobs. This is precisely down to a significantly greater take-up of cycling, not driving, to work.

Job creation and sustainable transport links are the key drivers for GPC investment, and partnership is the defining approach. Therefore, I would like to ask for the Assembly's support in proposing that the GPC commit necessary funds to complete the Cambridgeshire portion of this scheme, which amounts to approximately £2 million, and works with the LEP to ensure release of their pledged funds to deliver the whole scheme within the timescales I have noted here.

This would be great win:win for residents, businesses, the GCP and the LEP.

**Question not being taken at this meeting, questioner will be provided with a written answer**

#### **Question from Patrick von Heimendahl**

Last year the protest against the City Deal concentrated around the road closures. These closures would have hit many small businesses which required vehicle access. Many businesses are struggling to keep afloat for various reasons. One of them being access. Old established independent businesses contribute the flair and charm of living in our city. Open the paper and you read that small independent businesses in our City are facing a tough time. Since last year, amongst others, we have seen the loss of 'The Cambridge Toy Shop', 'Clowns' and recently 'Hobbs' after 86 years and 'Arthur Shepard' after 115 years.

It is without doubt that the road closures the City Deal proposed would have been another nail in the coffin of small independent businesses and would lead to an avalanche of further closures. We do not want this to happen!

In a meeting with the Interim Transport Director of GCP at the End of March it was mentioned that the City Access policy is to plan to make cross city access impossible. The traffic survey in June, few doubt, will have looked for and found evidence to support such a

policy. You all heard of the disastrous 'petal scheme'. This apparently unauthorised insight into the plans of the traffic planners bears the same hallmarks the road closures. Imagine you come down Hills Road and at the end the turning onto East Road is taken away. This is practically like a road closure. Now imagine on other main arteries into town similar policies are implemented.

These policies will lead to rat running and a dissection of our city. Cambridge has an unusually transient and mobile population but for the core residents and businesses the city is our neighbourhood. Such a policy only differ marginally from the PCCP and businesses and residents will pay hugely for such a negative policy.

By abandoning the road closure last year the Assembly and the Executive Board of the City Deal showed wisdom. A new policy to make cross City access impossible is so similar that by the same wisdom the Greater Cambridge Partnership Joint Assembly surely must refrain from considering such traffic measures again. Could the Greater Cambridge Partnership Joint Assembly please confirm that it will not look at such a policy which will be disastrous and dangerous to our businesses?