



**GREATER  
CAMBRIDGE  
PARTNERSHIP**

Growing and sharing prosperity

Delivering our City Deal

**FEEDBACK FROM THE JOINT ASSEMBLY MEETING  
15<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2018**

**Report To: Greater Cambridge Partnership Executive Board**

**6<sup>th</sup> December 2018**

**Report From: Councillor Tim Wotherspoon, Chair, Greater Cambridge Partnership Joint Assembly**

**1. Overview**

- 1.1. This report is to inform the Executive Board of the discussions at the Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) Joint Assembly held on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> November 2018, which the Board may wish to take into account in its decision making.
- 1.2. Ten public questions were received. Six questions related to item six on the agenda, the Cambourne to Cambridge Better Public Transport Scheme and four questions related to item eight, Histon Road Bus Cycling and Walking Improvements.
- 1.3. Four reports were considered and a summary of the Joint Assembly discussion is set out below.

**2. Cambourne to Cambridge Better Public Transport Scheme**

- 2.1 The Joint Assembly noted that the Cambourne to Cambridge Local Liaison Forum (LLF) had met on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2018 to discuss the proposals. Helen Bradbury, LLF Chair attended the meeting to present a summary of the discussion. The LLF had expressed concerns about the timing of LLF meetings and questioned the value of public consultation. In addition to a number of further comments and requests for information, the LLF had agreed three recommendations calling for a decision on the preferred route to be deferred until there was greater clarity on the Cambridge Autonomous Metro (CAM); asking for a northern off road comparator to be developed; and early progress on an in-bound bus lane on Madingley Road.
- 2.2 The Joint Assembly had a lengthy debate on the proposals and expressed mixed opinions, with no consensus view emerging.
- 2.3 Some members spoke in support of the proposals and hoped that the Executive Board would progress this scheme. It was pointed out that the development strategy adopted by the GCP aimed to provide the 'best in class' public transport available and it was suggested that the proposals set out in the paper achieved this. There was a clear need for a major transport route that could meet the needs of existing communities as well as the residents of the new houses planned along this western corridor. The potential impact on Coton was acknowledged, but the wider benefits and local plan requirements were recognised, which

meant the public transport solution now needed progressing. The prospect of getting from Cambourne to Cambridge in less than 30 minutes was welcomed and it was suggested that this was the sort of step change people wanted to see. From a business perspective journey time was paramount. Referring to the arguments for a northern route, it was pointed out that these had already been listened to and the route had been discounted. With that in mind it was suggested this should not be revisited. It was pointed out that Madingley Road could not be expanded to the extent that was needed to accommodate the commuting traffic from existing and future new developments outside the city.

- 2.4 Some members raised concerns about the proposals, referring to the possible introduction of an interim solution. As Cambridge Autonomous Metro (CAM) compliance was now a policy requirement there was a feeling that it was necessary to compare two schemes that were both compliant. Questions were asked about the choreography, process and timeframe for taking forward the proposals and it was suggested that an interim solution should be developed, leading to long term optimal alignment. This could cost significantly less and would allow more time for a longer term CAM system to be developed. If an interim solution looked attractive it should be pursued, even if it caused delay. Dealing with the urgent problem would buy time and that would be the best way to future proof any decision taken. Concern about some elements of the planned mitigation was also expressed.
- 2.5 The importance of transparency was emphasised. It was suggested that old ground should not be revisited but it would be useful for a summary of the discussions that had already taken place on this scheme to be available.
- 2.6 It was suggested that cycling improvements should be explored as this might offer an alternative and some quick wins.
- 2.7 Further information was requested on how the wider economic benefits had been assessed. In addition it was asked if the Red, Amber Green (RAG) scoring of public acceptability could be more granular and whether a sensitivity analysis could be done. It was also asked why the northern route had been rejected when the Arup report suggested that it had been competitive.

### **3. City Access and Bus Service Improvements**

- 3.1 Members welcomed the report as a first step in transforming city access and developing a world class public transport network for Greater Cambridge. The Joint Assembly was supportive of these proposals but commented on the need to ensure the public transport offer included provision for villages not on the CAM network and the importance of walking and cycling as part of the mix of options when looking at competitiveness of different travel modes. It was also important to take account of people travelling from a wider geographical area, some of whom would not necessarily be travelling into the city centre.
- 3.2 Members expressed a range of views on the options for demand management. They emphasised the importance of bringing to life the public transport improvements during the proposed engagement and using this to ask meaningful questions about both public transport and demand management choices. It was important to engage with local businesses and traders. Fast and cheaper public transport should be the main aim and proposed solutions should be designed with that in mind.

- 3.3 A number of members highlighted the need for this to be progressed as soon as possible. City access was the number one issue for businesses and urgent action on this was required and further delays in reaching a decision must be avoided. It was suggested that there was a tendency for everyone to think this was someone else's problem, when in fact it was a problem for everyone.
- 3.4 The Joint Assembly commented on the importance of asking the right questions resulting in meaningful answers, which would enable Councillors of all 'flavours' to understand where the public was on this issue. It was suggested that there was a huge temptation for people to be divisive about this subject, but there was evidence in the report to suggest there were potential benefits for everyone. It was a shared problem for people living inside and outside the City. Divisive politics should be avoided. The questions and supporting material were key and should be carefully pitched to engage with people living outside Cambridge as well as those living in the city. The possibility of setting up a Citizens' Assembly was welcomed.

#### **4. Histon Road Bus Cycling and Walking Improvements**

- 4.1 The Joint Assembly received a statement from City Councillor Mike Todd-Jones, Chair of the Histon Road LLF, which summarised public consultation and LLF discussions on the proposed amendment and modifications to the Histon Road proposals. Councillor Todd-Jones drew attention to the fact that while the LLF had been generally satisfied with the modifications, changes to the Histon Road/Gilbert Road/Warwick Road junction were contentious and did not have the support of the LLF. He added that given the contentious issues that remained a further LLF meeting had been arranged in advance of the December Executive Board meeting. This meeting would take place on Monday 26<sup>th</sup> November at 6.00 p.m. at the Meadows Community Centre.
- 4.2 The Joint Assembly welcomed the fact that overall the proposals had public support, but was concerned to hear that there was widespread opposition to the planned changes to the Gilbert Road junction. It was noted that this related to changes made following the public consultation and had resulted in significant public concern and negative feedback about engagement. It was of particular concern that the Cambridge Cycling Campaign had withdrawn its support for the proposals. The Joint Assembly was concerned about this apparent loss of faith and acknowledged that a key aim of the proposals for Histon Road was to make the route safer for cyclists. It was hoped that outstanding concerns would be addressed at the forthcoming LLF meeting. This would enable the points raised to be reviewed and determine whether further improvements to the scheme would be possible, ideally reaching a segregated solution that was acceptable to all concerned.

#### **5. Quarterly Monitoring Report**

- 5.1 The Joint Assembly noted progress on the Greater Cambridge Partnership programme, as detailed in the report. In addition to the routine budget and performance monitoring information, the report contained an overview of cycling projects and an update on the recent skills procurement exercise. In relation to the latter, the Joint Assembly was reassured that officers were working with procurement experts to review the process and documentation to help understand why the exercise had not been successful and would take steps to ensure a more positive outcome from the next exercise.

- 5.2 Referring to the Smart Places progress report it was noted that phase 2 status was shown as 'green' although detailed actions had yet to be agreed. It was suggested this be reviewed at the next Working Group. The same report referred to a bid for 'C-CAV2' the next round of funding for development of autonomous vehicles. It was noted that if successful this would potentially extend the scope outside the city into surrounding villages, including the potential development of autonomous vehicle hubs. Consideration would need to be given to how to engage these communities in a wider debate on this.