

Feedback from the Joint Assembly Meeting 23rd November 2022

Report to: Greater Cambridge Partnership Executive Board

Date: 15th December 2022

Lead: Councillor Tim Bick, Joint Assembly Chairperson

1. Background

- 1.1 This report is to provide the Executive Board with a summary of the discussion at the Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) Joint Assembly meeting held on Wednesday 23rd November 2022. The Executive Board is invited to take this information into account in its decision making.
- 1.2 Two questions were received. Both related to the Greater Cambridge Greenways proposals for Haslingfield and Comberton.
- 1.3 It was noted that a petition relating to the Cambourne to Cambridge Project, presented by Cambridge Past, Present and Future, and supported by an alliance of organisations had been received in advance of the last Executive Board meeting. Following discussions with the petitioner it had been agreed that the most appropriate route for the petition was for it to be formally presented to the Cambridgeshire County Council meeting when it considered the Transport and Works Act Order in the new year.
- 1.4 A second petition relating to the Comberton Greenway proposals had been submitted by Highfield Farm Touring Park. It called for the Comberton Greenway to come down the west side of Long Road rather than the proposed east side.
- 1.5 Four reports were considered and a summary of the main points emerging from the Joint Assembly discussion is set out below.

2. Quarterly Progress Report

- 2.1 The Joint Assembly noted the report, which set out progress across the whole GCP programme. Members endorsed plans to appoint a consultant to help with the GCP's Gateway Review. In response to a question, it was clarified that advice from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities was that additional support be engaged to assist with this work.

- 2.2 Members welcomed plans to continue funding the Cambridge University Centre for Business Research (CBR) to provide a sectorial employment analysis for the Greater Cambridge economy. The consensus was this was a valuable source of high quality data. It was suggested that more could be done to encourage others to use it; establishing a 'single source of truth'. Noting the disparities in turnover and employment between the Knowledge Intensive (KI) sector and non-KI companies, it was suggested that it would be useful if the CBR was asked to look at this in more detail.
- 2.3 Commenting on the information about performance against targets in the report, one member drew attention to projects where target dates had changed without any notification or commentary. A commitment was made to address this and ensure there was more transparency in future.
- 2.4 The Joint Assembly welcomed the skills update and in general felt things were going well. Comments were made about the challenges being faced and it was asked whether there was more that could be done beyond the work with Form the Future. Members were reminded that the focus of the City Deal was to support STEM [Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics] skills. More recently other shortage areas had emerged, for example in construction and agriculture. GCP officers recognised the importance of working closely with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, which had responsibility to support wider skills, but undertook to look at ways members' wider ambitions might be addressed.

3. Greater Cambridge Greenways: Haslingfield and Comberton

- 3.1 The Joint Assembly endorsed the next steps for the Comberton and Haslingfield Greenways and supported the proposals set out in the report.
- 3.2 Members discussed a number of general points related to all Greenways and noted plans to produce strategies for lighting; surface treatments and materials; and signage. It was suggested that these be presented to a future meeting, with a view to providing reassurance about the detail of these and other Greenways proposals. In response to a question it was confirmed that GCP officers were working with County Council officers on the proposed Active Travel Design Guide, as well as ensuring appropriate teams were involved throughout the design of each scheme. It was suggested that reports should include more information on design quality, identifying the extent to which sections of the route met Local Transport Note (LTN) 1/20 and other relevant standards. This would ensure members were able to assess what the impact of the proposed changes would have on the attractiveness of routes for all users and at the same time balance aspiration against practical considerations.
- 3.3 There was a discussion about responsibility for maintenance of the Greenways. It was noted that once the schemes were completed there would be a formal transfer of responsibility to the County Council as Highways Authority for the area. Officers were discussing how the GCP could support County Council colleagues with the financial cost of delivering that maintenance, rather than simply pass on a financial pressure. It was suggested that it would be helpful for everyone to be completely clear when the development phase of each scheme was finished and the County Council became responsible for maintenance. Officers agreed to look at this.

4. Smart Cambridge Update and Forward Programme

- 4.1 The Joint Assembly welcomed the update on progress with the delivery of SMART Cambridge and supported the proposed forward work plan. Members stressed the importance of this work in underpinning all aspects of the GCP programme, taking an innovative approach from the outset. A critical feature was how to scope and deliver behaviour change, making sure it was embedded at the heart of all projects.

5. Developing the GCP Approach to Biodiversity Net Gain

- 5.1 The Joint Assembly welcomed the paper and noted the opportunities and approach to achieving up to 20% biodiversity net gain across the GCP programme. While there was general support for the proposals, some members commented on the level of ambition and suggested it should be higher. Members sought assurance that as far as possible data was being collected on completed schemes and welcomed plans to focus on establishing a consistent baseline across the whole programme.
- 5.2 Members emphasised the importance of working with partners and collaborating on biodiversity measures and welcomed confirmation that the GCP was already working collaboratively with the Landscape Heritage and Ecology Group, the County Council and other stakeholders and this would continue as work progressed.
- 5.3 There was a difference of opinion about the application of the mitigation hierarchy. Overall a sensitive approach was needed, balancing a desire to provide on site measures within the red line boundary against a realistic assessment of what was achievable and sustainable in the long term.

Background Papers

Source Documents	Location
None	N/A