

## **Chairman's report of the Greater Cambridge City Deal Joint Assembly meeting held on 13 November 2015**

### **1. General Report**

We received no questions from the public and have no general points to raise with the Board, except those related to the agenda items reported below.

### **2. Recommendations on reports to the Board**

#### **2(a) Western Orbital – options and approval to consult**

Progress with this scheme was welcomed by members, but some criticism was expressed with the difficulty of understanding the very small maps and the differences between them, even for this early conceptual stage.

In the course of our discussion a number of points were agreed with officers in relation to their report:

- It was confirmed that the prospect of agreement to use the accommodation bridge over the M11 at J11 for buses would be confirmed prior to any initial public consultation
- Officers agreed to consider how they could explain in the consultation the constraints which exist on varying individual traffic management measures solely to support traffic flow on and off the M11, as they each had a role to play within the broader system
- A study of home addresses of commuters to the Biomedical Campus had been carried out by employers, showing a concentration in the CB23/CB24 postcodes, implicitly strengthening the case for a western orbital bus route; this would be shared with officers
- A suggestion for the bus operators to be invited by the Assembly to discuss their approach to orbital routes of the kind proposed was supported by officers
- The potential contribution of a Park & Ride site on Huntingdon Road to intercept southbound traffic from the A14 would be evaluated alongside the options identified in the report.

In addition, a number of members expressed support for encouraging cycling from Park & Ride sites or providing additional, specific Park & Cycle points. A plea was also made to highlight environmental issues at the earliest possible stage.

Members felt that even for the initial, conceptual stage of consultation, they would like to be satisfied that the above issues had been addressed beforehand and that they could be confident that what was sent out to the public was clear and well explained. This would cause a slight delay to the start of the consultation, but it was considered that this should be tolerable, given that the project was expected to be delivered only in tranche 2 and that there would still be ample time for development work during tranche 1. This which was accepted by officers. When the item was brought back to the Assembly and Board in the spring, members requested that it should be accompanied by a further update report on the investigation into standalone project at J11 on the M11 which had been agreed by the Board on 1 October 2015.

Accordingly, the Assembly recommended to the Board that it:

- (a) Notes the findings from the early Western Orbital technical report.
- (b) Approves the development of further work on the scheme.
- (c) Notes the progress made on assessing standalone bus priority options for M11 Junction 11.
- (d) Amends the public consultation's timetable so that it commences in the Spring 2016, in order that a draft of the consultation document can be considered by the Joint Assembly and Executive Board at their February and March meetings respectively.

## **2(b) Initial prioritisation of schemes for tranche 2 – report on further economic appraisal**

Susan van de Ven, County Councillor for the Meldreth division, who had given prior notice, reported to the Assembly on the progress of the Cambridge to Royston A10 cycle scheme which had not been included in the final programme of schemes for tranche 1 funding from the City Deal. She welcomed that with the support of the County Council, funding had meantime been obtained through Cycling Ambition grant to create a cycle and pedestrian link between Foxton and Harston. However the southern part of the route, between Royston and Melbourn, remained unfunded. This southern stretch was regarded as a key missing link to a corridor of communities and businesses which had integrity as a whole and was already participating in work to achieve behaviour change and modal shift. Community fundraising was now going on to try and realise an offer of match funding to financial support which was still hoped for from the City Deal to complete the corridor.

The Assembly noted that the overall Cambridge to Royston cycle link remained on the long list of schemes not prioritised for tranche 1 funding and that the unfunded part of this would be assessed along with other schemes for inclusion in tranche 2. It agreed to convey to the Board Cllr van de Ven's appeal.

In discussing the officers' report, the Assembly agreed to recommend the addition of two schemes to the long list of schemes which would be subject to assessment for inclusion in tranche 2:

- A city centre bus and coach capacity management scheme, which would clearly be necessary to accommodate the increase in bus and coach access to the centre, given both the projected population growth of Greater Cambridge and the modal shift to public transport that other City Deal schemes were seeking to achieve. Such a scheme had to recognise the important environmental constraints within the centre, the potentially increased pollution and the need to enable sharing of available space with cyclists and pedestrians which was safe and congenial.
- A Huntingdon Road Park & Ride site, which had been advanced earlier as a consideration in relation to the Western Orbital strategy. Such a scheme had been previously regarded by the City Council as a potential means of mitigating the traffic impact in the city of the improved A14. It could also serve to "intercept" city-bound traffic from the north, which could not exit the M11 from J13 and would otherwise have to travel as far as J11 before reaching an intuitively located Park & Ride.

The Assembly recognised that the tranche 2 schemes at this stage constituted only a long list, but it considered that these two additional projects should be added to it at this point so that they could be subject to the assessment process at the same stage as the other schemes.

The Assembly also proposed a modification of the definition of a project already on the list: "Newmarket Road to Cambridge Science Park", so that it was not limited to the new rail station.

Accordingly, the Assembly recommended to the Board that it:

- (a) Approves the process and timescales for agreeing the tranche 2 prioritised infrastructure improvement programme.
- (b) Approves preparatory work to support and inform tranche 2 decisions, including scheme assessment and interim work for the Local Plans regarding Cambridge Northern Fringe East, and approve funding from the prioritised 'tranche 2 programme development' budget to cover one third of the Cambridge Northern Fringe East work (estimated at £70,000) as part of the pipeline work.
- (c) Agrees to make the following amendments to the list of schemes set out in paragraph 8 of the report:
  - the removal of the word 'Station' in respect of the Newmarket Road to Cambridge Science Park Station bus priority scheme;
  - the addition of a city centre bus and coach capacity management scheme;
  - the addition of a Huntingdon Road Park and Ride scheme.

### **2(c) Workstream update**

On this report a number of points were registered by members:

- Anxiety about the continued delay in appointing a Strategic Communication Manager and a suggestion that the twice-failure to recruit be analysed for underlying causes which should be urgently addressed, given the importance of communications to the current phase of the City Deal.
- Concern over the postponement of the A1307 transport scheme being brought to the Assembly and Board early in 2016 and questions over whether the work officers were doing on this addressed the entirety of the scheme the Board had approved. Officers agreed to ensure that the originally approved specification was being addressed.
- A request for an update to the Assembly on progress in the formation of a Greater Cambridge Combined Authority, embracing the City Deal, and its relationship to the other current agenda for a Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority.

The Assembly noted the workstream update.

## **2(d) Six-monthly report on skills**

The Assembly welcomed the award of the Skills Service contract to 'Form the Future' and agreed to invite it to present to a future meeting.

Members looked forward to the convening of the Assembly sub-group to fulfil its advisory and reporting role with the Skills Service. It would expect that group to discuss with the Skills Team their key performance indicators in more detail, including consideration of some measure of outcomes in terms of supply meeting demand, to supplement the measures of activity.

Officers agreed to quantify the baseline number of apprenticeships, which the City Deal was aiming to increase by 420, and communicate it outside our meeting.

## **2(e) Greater Cambridge City Deal Forward Plan**

This was noted by the Assembly.