



**CAMBRIDGESHIRE
& PETERBOROUGH**
COMBINED AUTHORITY

TRANSPORT & INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM No: 2.1
9 SEPTEMBER 2020	PUBLIC REPORT

COVID-19 – TRANSPORT RESTART

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1. This report updates the Committee on the restart of the transport system following the Covid-19 restrictions.

<u>DECISION REQUIRED</u>	
Lead Member:	Mayor James Palmer
Lead Officer:	Paul Raynes, Delivery and Strategy Director
Forward Plan Ref: Not applicable	Key Decision: No
The Transport Committee is recommended to: Note the update and comment on priorities for further activity to restart the transport system.	Voting arrangements NA

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1. The government said that it expects Combined Authorities to lead the restart of the transport system following the Covid lockdown. The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority has therefore been working within the framework of the Local Resilience Forum (the Strategic Coordinating Group and its Recovery Coordination Group) to convene partners able to influence the transport recovery.
- 2.2. The Transport Restart Group is chaired by the Combined Authority and brings together the two highways authorities, police and public health colleagues, the two main city councils, a representative bus operator, Network Rail, Highways England, and the Department for Transport. It has met weekly since 1 June.

2.3. The group has three main tasks:

- (a) ensuring the public transport restarts to as near 100% of pre-Covid network as possible;
- (b) ensuring a package of active travel measures is implemented to mitigate potential increases in private car use;
- (c) monitoring data in relation to the impact of Covid – 19 on transport and considering what further measures might be needed to maintain the transport recovery.

2.4. Home to school transport is not directly within the group's remit, but the group has liaised with the education authorities and in particular supported their work to ensure the availability of enough transport from the first week in September, as well as considering the potential for congestion around schools should more journeys than usual be made by private car.

3.0 CURRENT SITUATION

3.1. During the extreme of the trough during lockdown, vehicle traffic on main roads in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough fell to 30% of pre-lockdown levels. 42% of buses and 50% of trains ran, and passenger numbers were just 4% of normal

3.2. At the time of preparing this report, vehicle traffic has bounced back to 105% of pre-lockdown levels across the area, and in South Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire is at 120% and more of pre-lockdown levels. This has, so far, been without a return of significant congestion. Although the available data do not allow us to analyse times of travel, comparison with information about bus ridership suggests that journeys are more evenly spread through the day. There is limited evidence, so far, of a return to a rush hour. This is corroborated by the fact that the lowest levels of vehicle traffic recovery are being seen in the city – and therefore employment - centres of Cambridge and Peterborough.

3.3. Bus firms have made a determined effort to restore their networks. Supported (subsidised) services are running at 100% of normal levels. Commercial services are running at over 90% of normal levels. Passenger numbers have not recovered, however, and are at about 30-35% of normal. The implications of this for the economics of those commercial services will be obvious. An Emergency Bus Service Support Grant has been provided by the government to ensure that services can continue. That grant has been extended indefinitely on a rolling 8-week basis. It is worth noting that, unlike some other areas, collaboration to date between bus firms and the Transport Authority has been strong and there have not at this point been differences of view about acceptable service levels.

3.4. Although data on train services are not published, we understand the general picture within the rail system is similar.

3.5. An up-to-date presentation of the situation, which will reflect the first few days of the return to school, will be given to the Committee at the meeting.

- 3.6. The Restart Group has made contingency plans for possible changes to the volume of vehicle traffic at peak times, including anticipating the September return to school and work with public messaging to encourage the safe use of public transport and active travel. It is not possible to forecast the potential congestion impact of the likely extra journeys, and the Group has of necessity adopted a Monitor and Manage approach.
- 3.7. The Combined Authority was awarded £2.94 million for active travel measures. This funding will be received in two tranches, but the Combined Authority has taken the cashflow risk and advanced the full amount to Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council ahead of receiving the money from the government.
- 3.8. The measures funded by Tranche 1 were due to be completed by the end of August and those funded by Tranche 2 by the end of the financial year.
- 3.9. In Tranche 1:
- (a) Peterborough City Council have delivered 6 schemes in tranche 1 with additional monitoring sensors, some city wide promotional signage, and will commence the school streets projects once the schools go back;
 - (b) Cambridgeshire County Council have delivered
- 3.10. In Tranche 2:
- (a) Peterborough will deliver three segregated cycle lanes.
 - (b) Cambridgeshire County council
- 3.11. The Combined Authority has also received a grant of £678,000 to fund extra home to school transport. This will be passported to the two Education Authorities. The lead on home to school transport is with the Education Authorities. Combined Authority officers have liaised with home to school transport colleagues and offered support with sourcing extra capacity.
- 3.12. The Transport Restart Group will continue to meet for the time being, and to report through the RCG and SCG mechanisms of the Local Resilience Forum.

4.0 SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1. There are no significant implications not set out above.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. The Combined Authority has received £275,000 as additional bus support funding through the Emergency Bus Services Support Grant funding, which is additional to existing concessions and tendered service payments. Bus operators will be required to maintain necessary services at a level which is sufficient to meet much reduced demand, but also to allow social distancing for passengers.

- 5.2. The Combined Authority received £2.94m Active Travel grant, which has been passed onto Peterborough City Council and Cambridgeshire County Council to deliver identified cycling improvement measures during this pandemic period to encourage cycling and walking across the region
- 5.3. The Combined Authority received £678,000 Home-school funding which will be forwarded onto the Peterborough City council and Cambridgeshire County Council Home to School Transport services Team, to ensure there is sufficient transport capacity so children and young people can get to school and college safely and on time. Funding is being provided to support the costs of additional transport provision for the first Autumn half term.

6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. The recommendations accord with CPCA's powers under Parts 3 and 4 of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Order 2017 (S1 2017/251).

7.0 APPENDICES

- 7.1. None