

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority
Transport and Infrastructure Committee: Minutes

Date: 16 November 2022

Time: 10.00a.m. – 11.55p.m.

Present: Councillor L Herbert (Deputy Mayor and Chair), Councillors Bovingdon, Cereste, McDonald, Seaton, Shailer, Smart and Wakeford

47. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Mayor Dr N Johnson, substituted by Councillor L Herbert, and Councillor K Thornburrow, substituted by Councillor M Smart.

48. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

49. Minutes – 13 July 2022

The minutes of the meeting on 13 July 2022 were approved as an accurate record and signed by the Deputy Mayor.

50. Combined Authority Forward Plan

The Combined Authority Forward Plan was noted.

51. Public Questions

Three questions had been received from members of the public, as set out in Appendix A, together with responses from the Chair.

52. A16 Norwood Dualling

The Committee received a report detailing an overview of the Outline Business Case for the A16 Norwood Improvement Project. The scheme continued to demonstrate high value for money, with a Benefit Cost Ratio of 2.9. It also had strategic value by supporting local growth, critically, the construction of at least 2,000 homes on the Norwood growth side. Attention was drawn to the following two options for consideration, which were to defer approval or to draw down £1.2m from the Medium-Term Financial Plan for the development of the full business case subject to a

Transforming Cities Funding (TCF) allocation. It was noted that there were ongoing discussions taking place with the Department for Transport (DoT) around the management of the TCF fund and deliverability within the necessary timescales. It had been agreed with Peterborough City Council that the scheme could not be constructed within TCF timescales so construction would not be funded through this funding stream.

One Member questioned the confidence in the risk adjusted base cost of £12.9m. It was noted that this figure was based on the latest information from the Engineering Council and had been adjusted for inflation; Members were informed that officers would continue to monitor this figure closely.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) approve the Outline Business Case for the A16 Norwood Improvement Project.
- b) recommend to the Combined Authority Board to approve the drawdown of £1.2 million from the Medium-Term Financial Plan for the development of the Full Business Case and to seek delegated authority to the Interim Head of Transport to enter into a Grant Funding Agreement with Peterborough City Council following consultation with the Monitoring Officer and Chief Financial Officer.

53. Wisbech Rail

The Committee received a report detailing the next steps for Wisbech Rail. Network Rail had identified a strong strategic focus within the 2020 business case for public transport links from Wisbech and the potential benefits of connecting to Cambridge. It had recommended removing assumptions about Ely Area Capacity Enhancement (EACE) to enable Wisbech to Cambridge to be a standalone project. It was also assumed that one train path might be available at Ely North Junction and a further train path could be sought through EACE. There was no guarantee that EACE would be successful given that the Government had not yet announced the next steps. Network Rail had also produced a high-level feasibility study for potential light rail to enable further options to be considered. The report had concluded that there was potential for a light rail passenger operation between March and Wisbech highlighting Tram-Train or Very Light Rail.

During discussion, individual Members:

- highlighted the need to keep both the heavy and light rail options open. There was great concern over the Ely Junction and its impact on the Wisbech to March route. A recent letter from Grant Shapps MP had inferred that Ely Junction was unlikely to happen soon. The Interim Head of Transport reported that he had attended parliament on 15 November 2022 for a discussion on the rail priority for Transport East who had suggested that EACE was a higher priority in its rail plan than other schemes. Several MPs present had suggested the need to push forward on EACE and there would be an event held in the new year with MPs to lobby DoT Ministers. It was believed that it was one of the highest priorities for the country, which had also been endorsed by senior officers from Great British Rail and Network Rail.

- queried whether opting for an Options Assessment Report would have a negative impact on EACE. The Interim Head of Transport highlighted the need for an options appraisal, which would assess all options. EACE was a national priority so would not be impacted adversely.
- highlighted the omission of future possibilities in the report such as using existing rolling stock. The report referred strongly to EACE but did not mention the new university at Peterborough, which meant that trains could be used by Wisbech residents to travel via March not necessarily to Cambridge. The report was about connecting Wisbech, which included freight and future expansion, but it was not about doing all or nothing. Heavy rail should not be removed as it was hoped it might enhance the business case for EACE.
- suggested that the more capacity available on peripheral routes added to the pressure to do the Ely project.
- highlighted figure 29 on page 407, which provided a comparative qualitative assessment of each vehicle option against key elements. It was suggested that the ability to operate on the main line should be weighted higher than the other options. The Chair reported that there was also the issue of cost in relation to heavy rail.
- acknowledged the importance of proceeding with the options assessment report to be ready if something changed nationally. It was noted that Members in the Wisbech area had expressed a preference for a heavy rail option to be included.
- queried the likely impact of the Autumn Statement on the project. The Interim Head of Transport reported that whilst the Combined Authority awaited the impact on its budget, at the moment funding to progress this scheme was currently in the budget.
- confirmed that the Network Rail document valid until 6 October 2022 could be rolled forward.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) continue to promote and lobby for heavy rail based on the information provided by the 2020 business case and GRIP 3b and recognise that potential delivery of Wisbech to Cambridge timeframe was linked to the delivery of Ely Area Capacity Enhancements (EACE).
- b) undertake an Options Assessment Report to provide the economic analysis on mode options, including existing information on heavy rail, based on a service operating between Wisbech and March which removed the current dependency on EACE whilst still being mindful of the future strategy to link into Cambridge.
- c) recommend to the Combined Authority Board to approve the drawdown of £80,000 from the Medium-Term Financial Plan for the development of an Options Assessment Report and to seek delegated authority to the Interim Head of

Transport to enter into a Development Services agreement with Network Rail following consultation with the Monitoring Officer and Chief Financial Officer.

54. Snailwell Loop

The Committee considered a report which was looking to enhance the rail network to improve the offer for national, regional, and local businesses, as well as enhancing the connectivity from and to its communities. The potential improvements included EACE and Snailwell Loop schemes. The benefits of the Snailwell Loop could not be released until the EACE scheme to the north was completed, as the area around Ely currently acted as a significant bottleneck for rail services.

During discussion of the report, Members:

- highlighted that one of the key benefits to Soham Railway Station was its links to Ely but another fundamental issue was its ability to transport people to Cambridge to access education. The Snailwell Loop had always been part of the proposals for Soham Railway Station. Although, it was acknowledged that the Snailwell Loop was tied into the EACE scheme, Network Rail had indicated that it could proceed independently of EACE. It was therefore important to support recommendations b and c.
- highlighted the fact that this scheme faced the same issues as Wisbech Rail. However, it was important to support anything which helped the local area transport communication.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) recommend to the Combined Authority Board to pause works on Snailwell Loop for a period of 6 months while there was on-going uncertainty about the Ely Area Capacity Enhancement (EACE) scheme and slip the existing budget into 2023-24.
- b) recommend to the Combined Authority Board to approve £150k of the current £500k subject to approval budget to enable continued development of the project and slip the balance into 2023-24.
- c) continue to work with local and regional partners to urge Government to support the EACE scheme.

55. Bus Strategy

The Committee considered a report outlining the programme undertaken to enable the development of an appropriate Bus Strategy for the region. The Strategy was strongly aligned to the vision, aims and objectives of the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP). Attention was drawn to the Strategy which would be subject to a six-week consultation period. Feedback had already been received from Members and officers in relation to providing more access to key destinations such as education, retail, leisure and healthcare thereby providing social equality. There had also been a lot of focus on economic growth particularly in relation to access to educational establishments, and

the importance of the environment. It was acknowledged that there was a need to tighten the language and remove ambiguity in the Strategy.

The Combined Authority was required to submit a Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), which reflected the work undertaken on the draft Bus Strategy thereby ensuring a golden thread with the emerging LTCP, the Strategy and how improvements would be delivered. As such the DfT had extended the submission date for the BSIP; consultation would take place with bus operators following submission. The Interim Head of Transport reported that the Strategy would be updated following the meeting and he encouraged Members to submit any further comments to the Transport Team. It was noted that a virtual meeting between 11.30a.m. and 12.30p.m had been organised for the Committee and officers from the constituent councils with the Transport Team for 24 November 2022 before the meeting of the Board on 30 November 2022. The Interim Head of Transport also offered to hold one to one meetings with Chief Executives.

During the course of discussion, Members:

- highlighted the importance of an ambitious Strategy which was essential for interconnectivity and for supporting the skills agenda. There needed to be integration with all forms of transport but there should also be an aspiration regarding reducing care usage. It was important to bear in mind the people who could not afford to own a car.
- noted the draft vision for the Strategy set out in Section 2.13. It was suggested that “comprehensive” should cover a network of all the towns and villages served by Stagecoach before its withdrawal of some services. It was also suggested that “convenient, easy to use, reliable and good value for money” was about providing the routes people needed rather than the existence of routes.
- noted that Sections 2.18 and 2.19 referred to franchising. It was suggested that how the authority had carried out this work along with the conclusions should be made available to the public.
- suggested that the Strategy was currently too generic with some of the wording open to interpretation. There was concern about the inference to road charging in the Strategy particularly in relation to integration of travel. Some Members reported that they could not support road charging, which did not recognise the impact on rural areas. The Interim Head of Transport reported that there was nothing in the Strategy relating to road charging as any decision would depend upon the outcome of the Greater Cambridge Partnership consultation. He asked Members to identify any reference so that it could be addressed.
- noted the reference in the report to working with constituent authorities, but one Member highlighted that there had been no contact with officers at his authority.
- suggested that the major problem with buses was the lack of convenience. The buses needed to be comfortable and clean with courteous and knowledgeable staff. In relation to franchising, it was important that it was made clear to everyone what was happening particularly for those with no access to technology.

- highlighted the importance of buses to the skills agenda. It was noted that the March to Chatteris bus route cut by Stagecoach meant it was now not possible for young people to access the new apprenticeship building in Chatteris by public transport. Another discussion about this issue was therefore welcomed.
- acknowledged that the Strategy was not about removing car use but providing options by increasing capacity. It was also important to consider the benefits beyond those to bus users, which included the provision of infrastructure to create an environment where people could thrive.
- highlighted the need for a joined-up system with education transport for example, and on demand services using a ticket which could be used across several services. The Interim Head of Transport reported that in relation to integration through ticketing and interoperability was a key part of the LTCP.
- highlighted the need for more information as to how the Combined Authority could integrate with GCP City Access.
- suggested that the Combined Authority needed something credible to access government funding in a timely fashion.
- suggested that franchising was key to making the network work for the public, which could include the possibility of having an “Uber” type partner. The Interim Head of Transport reported that the Committee should have received a briefing on franchising.
- queried whether six weeks was sufficient for a consultation.
- highlighted the need for the Strategy to be sustainable, flexible and adaptable. Bus provision needed to be of a good quality, attractive and efficient.

In conclusion, the Chair reiterated the importance of involving Members and officers from the constituent authorities. He reported that the county could not afford to have any further cuts to its rural bus network as buses were a lifeline for some villages. The Combined Authority therefore had an essential role in the provision of bus services working with existing providers such as Stagecoach. However, it was important that the reliability of services was improved, and that franchising was discussed so that the county could benefit from having a range of bus operators. It was disappointing that the Government was only funding 40% of the bus network nationally.

It was resolved by a majority to:

- a) provide feedback on the draft Bus Strategy;
- b) recommend that the Combined Authority Board approves the Bus Strategy to allow for a 6-week public consultation; and
- c) delegate the responsibility to the Interim Head of Transport and the chair of the Transport and Infrastructure Committee in consultation with the Chief Finance

Officer and Monitoring Officer to submit the final Bus Service Improvement Plan to central government in a timely manner.

56. Demand Responsive Transport

The Interim Head of Transport highlighted a breach of process in relation to the absence of an appropriate authorisation, which had resulted in the Chief Executive instigating an internal investigation. On conclusion of this investigation, improvement measures would be implemented, and a summary would be provided to Members.

The Committee received a report detailing the outcomes of the Ting trial in West Huntingdonshire. Attention was drawn to the background to Ting Demand Responsive Transport. It had been successful in carrying more passenger numbers (nearly 30,000 per annum) contributing to modal shift. Market research involving two different types of survey (one app based and one paper based) and had shown a significant breakthrough into carrying teenagers and young adults on Ting. It was noted that 27% of people were using Ting to commute to and from work so it was therefore making a real difference to travel patterns. Value for money was assessed by cost per passenger carried, Ting was thirtieth out of forty-six services supported by the Combined Authority.

The Chair reported that there was a proposed change to the recommendations, which included amending recommendation b) so that the contract was only for one year and adding an additional recommendation c) to cover years 2 and 3.

During discussion, Members:

- welcomed the increase in numbers to 30,000, which reflected the kind of innovation needed, and provided lessons for elsewhere. It was hoped that it could be rolled out to other areas of the Combined Authority.
- highlighted the fact that the Board had been told the cost per passenger was £17 when the committee papers stated £14. It was noted that the cost varied monthly depending on how many people used the service.
- highlighted comparisons to the cost of the Ely Zipper at £10,400 which carried 22,000 passengers per annum. The Chair reported that the Ely Zipper and the Wisbech bus would be funded until next year when a further decision would need to be made.
- expressed support to extending the service but not instead of innovative approaches to filling in the gaps which conventional services could not fill. The report made a compelling case for the value of extending this scheme, which was capturing a different demographic. It was important to note that the qualitative feedback also included face to face interviews. It was disappointing that anecdotally what was perceived to be hugely valuable, which was providing a service for people with no alternative, had not been picked up. It was therefore important in future to capture data around the absence of alternative provision.
- queried whether passengers preferred Ting because it was so much cheaper than conventional services. It was noted that it was not significantly cheaper, but it was

carrying more passengers. It was also queried whether the demand resulting from Ting could be applied to existing services. It was noted that officers were looking at existing services, which carried passengers on a market day, to see whether they could be part of the Ting service. The Interim Head of Transport reported that the surveys set a baseline for this year which would need to be monitored in the future; any additional questions could be built into the surveys going forward.

- suggested that Ting needed to be seen as an experiment so it might not make money at this point.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) retrospectively authorise the expenditure to continue to procure the Ting service for the period 17 July to 16 October 2022;
- b) retrospectively authorise the tender and award of a new Ting DRT bus service contract in West Huntingdonshire starting 27 November 2022 for year one only of up to 3 years at a cost of £424,950 per annum; and
- c) recommend the Combined Authority Board retrospectively authorise the tender and award of a new Ting DRT bus service contract in West Huntingdonshire starting 27 November 2022 for years 2 and 3 at a cost of £424,950 per annum

57. Transforming Cities Fund

The Committee received a report setting out the expected (forecasted) spend in relation to the Transforming Cities Fund (TCF). The total budget in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough was £95m and following a robust and thorough review of the programme, it was noted that there was likely to be a £3m underspend. The Authority was working with the DoT on the deliverability of the TCF and as such it had submitted a realistic programme update to DoT. Central government had reiterated that projects needed to be delivered by March 2024 at the latest. It was noted that there were several capital replacement schemes which had been assessed robustly. However, it was important to set this programme in the context of the government's Autumn Statement with any updates in relation to TCF being reported to the committee.

Councillor Cereste declared a non-statutory disclosable interest as a Board Member of the Centre for Green Technology which had made an application for funding.

During discussion, individual Members:

- requested information on the passenger statistics for Soham Railway Station. Another Member requested an update on the dualling of the A47.
- queried the deadline for spending the TCF. It was noted that the Authority needed to get a spade in the ground by March 2023 with spend complete by March 2024, which was why a deliverability assessment had been made of the capital replacement schemes. Although the underspend was relatively small, it had been reduced robustly by challenging the Authority's programme management.

- noted the additional capital replacement schemes that would be funded utilising TCF set out in section 2.17 and queried what they were dependent on. It was also noted that there was a £3m underspend and approximately £2m which could be moved from Gainshare to pay a proportion of the Kings Dyke project.
- queried the reduction in the Mill Road scheme from £500k. It was noted that several schemes had scored incredibly highly so this scheme had been reduced to £150k to remain with the budget envelope and be deliverable.
- expressed disappointment that the A141 and St Ives project was not proceeding and that there was not a Huntingdonshire scheme in the capital replacement schemes.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) note the progress in managing the overarching TCF programme and recognise the positive feedback from central government;
- b) agree the recommended capital replacement schemes for the TCF programme for approval by the Combined Authority Board and central government;
- c) delegate powers to the Chair of the Transport and Infrastructure Committee to inform the Department for Transport of the revised TCF programme with the expectation that the fund will be allocated in full; and
- d) delegate powers to the interim Head of Transport in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer and Monitoring Officer to ensure the timely sign off for the Grant Funding Agreements with the County Council and other delivery partners, thereby reducing any potential delay in the programme.

58. Date of next meeting

It was resolved to note the date of the next Transport and Infrastructure Committee would be 18 January 2023.

Chair

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority – Public Questions

No.	Question from:	Question to:	Question
1.	Ely Cycling Campaign (Not in attendance)	Deputy Mayor Lewis Herbert	<p>The Combined Authority wrote to both Ely Cycling Campaign and Smarter Cambridge Transport about sustainable/integrated and active travel in letters both dated 30 September 2021. These letters mentioned that the Authority would be looking to advertise for an Active Travel Tsar in the near future. Further announcements about recruitment were promised for the near future.</p> <p>The same letters mentioned that there were proposals to bring together interested parties within an Active Travel Forum. Please would the Authority provide an update to the progress made in appointing an Active Travel Tsar and also in inaugurating an Active Travel Forum.</p>
	Response from:	Response to:	Response:
	Deputy Mayor Lewis Herbert	Ely Cycling Campaign	<p>Thank you to the Ely Cycling Campaign for your question. The Combined Authority is committed to developing an Active Travel Advocate. The name we will use rather than Tsar, and an Active Travel Lead to bring together interested parties in a new Active Travel Forum.</p> <p>The Combined Authority were recently invited to apply for over £800,000 of national funding called Capability and Ambition Funding being led by the new Active Travel England organisation. If successful, this will enable us to further progress the role of the Advocate and Lead, alongside developing projects and training and getting input from many organisations including yours.</p> <p>The Combined Authority is also trying to identify funds within its own budgets to ensure that these roles can continue beyond the period of the Capability and Ambition Funding.</p> <p>We await with hope and ambition the outcome of the bid that we have put into Active Travel England so thank you for that question.</p>

No.	Question from:	Question to:	Question
2	Paul Hollinghurst – Railfuture East Anglia (Question presented by Nick Dibben)	Deputy Mayor Lewis Herbert	<p>Network Rail’s light rail team concluded in their "Wisbech to March: Potential for Light Rail" report (that’s part of this meeting) that a Tram-Train solution appeared the best credible light rail option for the reopening, and rates highly in a comparative analysis with other rail based options.</p> <p>In another part of Cambridgeshire, the railway line to Haverhill was also assessed by Network Rail’s light rail team as part of the Department for Transport Restoring Your Railway fund bid which was rated as "a good case for future development " about which they commented that "this proposal has potential as a Tram-Train scheme" and "a light rail solution would reduce capital infrastructure costs for the reinstatement to Haverhill. The development of a Tram-Train fleet in this area could also tie with other opportunities such as Wisbech."</p> <p>Does the Combined Authority see the potential of Network Rail's light rail team's stated view that Tram-Train is not only appropriate for the Wisbech reopening, but also for the Haverhill reopening, and will the Combined Authority work with Network Rail's light rail team to evaluate Tram-Train in the Cambridgeshire area covering both these reopening schemes, and including services through to Cambridge on existing rail routes where paths are available? Such a study can be done irrespective of whatever decision is taken about the next step for the Wisbech reopening.</p>
	Response from:	Response to:	Response
	Deputy Mayor Lewis Herbert	Paul Hollinghurst – Railfuture East Anglia	<p>Thank you for your question from Railfuture East Anglia. The issue before us today is the Wisbech Rail and we have no stated preference currently about whether that’s light rail or heavy rail. In terms of the Wisbech Scheme, the paper provides options for the reopening of the line, including this proposal in the Options Assessment Report to consider both heavy and light rail and also to undertake an economic analysis on the preferred mode option.</p> <p>On the Haverhill project, essentially the additionality that the Combined Authority provides leaves that decision and those options primarily to the Greater Cambridge Partnership in that they were also awarded up to £500m for transport within that area so our focus is on the Wisbech project.</p>

			<p>Given that government has not announced also the future of the Ely Area Rail Capacity Enhancements, there is also a challenge there. The focus is on the Wisbech to March service in terms of the Combined Authority. The Option Assessment Report is to be undertaken including work by Network Rail given that they have got a light rail team as well as obviously heavy rail experience.</p> <p>So, at this stage the Combined Authority has got no view on either heavy or light rail for Wisbech, and we can't pre-empt, this Committee, the outcome of that work. So really, we have got to wait until we complete that Options Assessment Report before we can see. Of course, we are concerned about transport to and from Haverhill and if there are ways that we can assist and input into the work the GCP's doing then we will. Thank you.</p>
No.	Question from:	Question to:	Question
3	Verity Stow (not in attendance and received after main deadline)	Deputy Mayor Lewis Herbert	Since the 18 bus has been replaced by Whippet, every day essential service times are being cancelled. What is the Board going to do to fix this? As the public are left stranded.
	Response from:	Response to:	Response
	Deputy Mayor Lewis Herbert	Verity Stow	Officers have been in touch with Whippet, and we actually had an exchange which resulted in adding back a couple of services into their schedule, but a fuller answer will be sent to Verity and made available publicly so that other users of that essential 18 bus service can see. It is quite clear that the some of the problems particularly Stagecoach are suffering in terms of driver numbers are also being experienced by Whippet. We are talking to them, and I actually met Stagecoach a week ago Monday, and each of the bus operators are making efforts to recruit more drivers. That's essential because we can't actually operate a decent bus network if the level of cancellations we have been suffering recently continues.