



Transport and Infrastructure Committee		Agenda Item
13 September 2023		3
Title:	Public Questions	
Public Report:	Yes	

Question 1 – from Antony Carpen

To	Councillor Anna Smith, Lead Member, Transport
Question:	<p>Please could the Mayor/Combined Authority convene a meeting with the developers proposing major residential and sci/tech developments in and around Cambridge with a view to exploring both what their transport needs are likely to be, and how they can contribute towards a longer-term rail-based solution to Cambridge's chronic traffic congestion.</p>
Response:	<p>The Combined Authority are keen to improve the public transport offer across Cambridgeshire, Peterborough and beyond and in particular the enhancements to the rail network. We are looking to work with partners to improve the rail network, ranging for high-level strategic infrastructure projects, through to enhancements to the timetabling and integration of the rail network with other modes of travel and thereby providing alignment with our emerging Local Transport and Connectivity Plan.</p> <p>We recently held the Importance of Rail for the South-East and East of England Summit that was chaired by the Rt Hon Norman Baker. At this event we heard from a range of guests including:</p> <p>Steve Beel, Chief Executive Officer, Freeport East; Jonathan Denby, Head of Corporate Affairs, Greater Anglia; Alex Roy, Head of Policy, MAG (Manchester Airports Group); Helen Fallon, Principal Lead for National Networks, England Economic Heartland; Andy Summers, CEO, Transport East; Jess Cunningham, Transport Advisor Strategic Projects, Cambridge University; Beth West, CEO, East West Rail; Jamie Jones, Vice Principal (Operations and Infrastructure), ARU Peterborough.</p> <p>The meeting presented the Full Steam Ahead: Futureproofing British Business Through Rail Intervention document. In addition, the mayor, Dr Nik Johnson and the Combined Authority's CEO, Rob Bridge, sent a letter to the Secretary of State for Transport and the Chancellor of the Exchequer regarding Ely Junction. Businesses were given the opportunity to support Ely Junction by signing the letter, link below.</p> <p>Ely Area Capacity Enhancement: Letter to the Chancellor of the Exchequer - Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority (cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk)</p> <p>In addition, to continuing our support for improvement to the Ely Junction, the Combined Authority is working with other Local Authorities to engage with East-West Rail Ltd to maximise the opportunities for the people of Cambridgeshire.</p> <p>Finally, the officers meet with our surrounding Local Authorities to proactively discuss Network Rail's strategic rail plans to ensure that the concerns, risks, and opportunities at presented at the regional and national level. Strategic Rail plans across our greater regional requirement and ensure that the Local Transport and Connectivity Plans have an integrated approach for future transport planning. Therefore, to conclude the Combined Authority would welcome the opportunity to work with the developers of proposed new major sites around Cambridge on what the transport needs are going to be and how this could be delivered in partnership.</p>

Question 2 – from Paul Hollinghurst, Secretary, Railfuture East Anglia

To	Councillor Anna Smith, Lead Member, Transport
	<p>At the Transport and Infrastructure Committee meeting on 15th March 2023 in response to a public question it was stated that "The Combined Authority is working with Network Rail around the appraisal of options for the link between Wisbech and March." and "A further report will be provided to the Committee in summer 2023".</p> <p>The Agenda Document pack for the Transport and Infrastructure Committee meeting on 12th July recorded the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minutes of the meeting on 14 June 2023<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Specific item on Wisbech to March Rail Scheme to be presented at the September TIC meeting <p>The Agenda Document pack for the Transport and Infrastructure Committee meeting on 13th September records the following, which is different:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minutes of the meeting on 14 June 2023<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Specific item on Wisbech to March Rail Scheme to be presented at the November TIC meeting to align with the project timelines and engagement with Network Rail <p>Why has this entry been modified to a later date, and what is the status of the latest appraisal work between the Combined Authority and Network Rail which was due to be provided in Summer 2023 as this scheme seems to be stuck in an endless cycle of delays and reports?</p> <p>Relating to this, please could I also draw the committee's attention to an article about the Wisbech reopening and Tram-Train in the September 2023 edition of the industry respected magazine Modern Railways, a copy of which is attached.</p>
	<p>Response:</p> <p>The Forward Plan outlines that the Wisbech Rail project will be coming to the November 2023 TIC meeting to allow for the work being undertaken by Network Rail to be reported. At this meeting, officers will be in a position to outline the work undertaken on the range of options on the corridor between Wisbech and March. In the meantime, Network Rail are continuing to work on the Options Appraisal Report and progress will be reported at the November TIC meeting. In addition, Combined Authority officers are continuing to work with potential partners to identifying solutions for the corridor in the short, medium and longer-term. I have asked our officers to extend an invitation to Network Rail so we can hear from them directly at that meeting.</p>

Question 3 – from Sue Magill, local resident

To	Councillor Anna Smith, Lead Member, Transport
	<p>There is a rumour circulating that Peterborough will have a congestion charge, is this correct as Peterborough people need to know that it's a false rumour.</p>
	<p>The key part of this answer is that this is a question that you need to ask the Leader of Peterborough City Council and not us, because the decision lies with Peterborough City Council and not with us.</p> <p>It is for the City Council in Peterborough to decide whether to introduce a congestion charge as the relevant highways authority. I believe that this confusion may have arisen because the draft Local Transport and Connectivity Plan sets out a range of possible measures that could be taken across our region. Those measures are simply an attempt to outline a menu of measures which are neither compulsory nor exhaustive. Many of them would require by law the express buy-in of the relevant local highways authorities. In the case of charging in Peterborough, that relevant authority is the City Council as a tier 1 authority. Not only does the Combined Authority have no plans at all to ask for Peterborough to consider charging, the decision whether to accept that request even if it were made would lie squarely with Peterborough.</p>

	<p>I think that it is important to make it clear that Peterborough voting to allow the LTCP to pass would not change that. As I said, the LTCP simply sets out a basket of possible measures authorities may choose to use; it does not in any way override the powers of those local authorities to make those choices.</p> <p>It is also worth saying that Mayoral powers differ around the country. In London, the Mayor has greater power over highways issues but that is not the case here. Any comparison with what is happening in London is therefore spurious.</p> <p>You may be aware that the Combined Authority Mayor does not have a voting position on the GCP Board; and we have been clear all along that the decision of Cambridgeshire, Cambridge City and South Cambs as to whether as a joint committee of councils to pursue a charge in greater Cambridgeshire is theirs and not ours. We respect the decisions that the GCP Board comes to as the relevant authorities and we would similarly respect the decisions on charging that may or may not be made by Peterborough.</p> <p>So, to repeat, it is for Peterborough City Council to decide whether it wishes to introduce a congestion charge in Peterborough.</p>
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Question 4 – from Sarah Hughes, STZ Campaign Officer, Cambridgeshire Sustainable Travel Alliance

To	Councillor Anna Smith, Lead Member, Transport
	<p>In July and August, the Cambridgeshire Sustainable Travel Alliance interviewed 300+ bus users in Cambridge, Ely and Huntingdon. You can read the survey results on our website.</p> <p>Our interviews suggest that bus users rely deeply on bus services. 74% of non Park&Ride (P&R) bus users we talked to did not own or have access to a car (compared to the national average of 22% of households) and 56% said they would not have made their journey without the bus. As one bus user put it “I use the bus because I haven't got any other choice.”</p> <p>Our survey indicates that our buses are in a poor state, however. 44% of all non P&R users we surveyed and 51% of non P&R users in Cambridge said their services were late or unreliable. 37% of non P&R bus users said their bus services were too infrequent. People also told us that short operating hours and a lack of Sunday services limit opportunities. Here’s what some people told us:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The worst thing is the unreliability. I have no idea if it is coming or not. It’s difficult to be on time for hospital appointments.” • “On Saturday there was a two and a half hour wait because two buses were cancelled.” • “It'll say on the board they're coming then it won't turn up. There's two minutes to go then it's cancelled.” • “I want them to be on time. I want to be independent more. I want to get the bus but it's always late. I have to get picked up then” • “Weekends are impossible. I rely on colleagues, or my husband has to drive me from our village to work at Papworth hospital.” • “If there's no bus we’re stuck at home. Bank holidays we’re stuck. Sundays we’re stuck. We are older people and have to rely on buses.” • “We need later services. Teenagers just can't get to anything in Ely. The cinema is seven miles from Chatteris” <p>The Cambridge Sustainable Travel Alliance welcomes the Combined Authority’s proposals for reform of bus service provision.</p> <p>We further welcome the assumption that, at a minimum, the Combined Authority will be seeking to implement a “mid-level” of investment in service improvements.</p> <p>Could the Transport and Infrastructure Committee explain how future (now expected to be restricted) GCP funding will impact the Combined Authority’s ability to improve bus services in the Cambridge travel-to-work area?</p>
	<p>Thank you very much for your commitment, which we probably all share around this table, to improving public transport across the whole region. Like you and like everyone else here I am acutely aware of the importance of good public transport for all; not just including but probably especially for those who can’t drive, who don’t have access to a car, who can’t afford to run one and particularly those issues of rural</p>

connectivity. I had some experience of visiting the residents of the villages just outside of Peterborough who currently have no bus service so I am very aware of the issues in rural connectivity there.

We will absolutely continue our work on bus reform. There are several papers today which I hope demonstrate that commitment to continuing that work. That includes the first stages of a network review, and also the request for support from this committee to undertake a bus reform audit. A key part of the process in the next few months is a formal examination of the funding resources for bus reform and that's why we are hoping to pass that audit today as a recommendation to the Board.

The Greater Cambridge Partnership has funding to improve transport and we are very keen to work with the GCP so that we can explore how best to use those available funds for the people and business in our region.

Funding of buses is a very important issue: the East of England in general receive an average of £16 per head per person per year for public transport. Other comparable areas around the country can receive £36/37 per person per head. The East of England is significantly underfunded for public transport. It would be of course most desirable that there is some levelling up of that transport funding to bring the East of England to a closer level.

The funding sources are a matter for the audit which is a directed process from the government for us to go through if we are looking at bus reform.

We will keep this committee and others updated in the process as we go along.