

Overview & Scrutiny Questions for Transport & Infrastructure Committee

29 April 2020

Question 1 [Item 2.2 – Budget and Performance Report]

In terms of capital spend, a number of the projects have been delayed because of circumstances and now with Covid-19.

Is there any thoughts on how this will affect the plan for deliverables for 2020/2021?

Presumably, there may need to be a revision of the MTFP and budget for 2020/2021 and what is achievable in the new world that we are living in.

Response

At the date of this meeting, two transport projects, which were in construction, have been delayed as the result of decisions by the Local Resilience Forum and by contractors to cease work onsite. These are the projects on the A47 Junction 18 and the A605 Stanground. The situation is being kept under review in the hope that work on site can resume soon in accordance with government guidance on safe working and we remain optimistic that work will be c. No other transport projects have been significantly impacted by Covid at this point, although there has been limited delay to the consultation on the March Access study due to reconfiguring the consultation as a digital exercise. A small number of County Council projects have proposed that a budget contingency be created against potential Covid impacts. The Board has asked that a review of budget priorities for the Combined Authority as a whole be undertaken to reflect the overall impact of Covid and the need to promote economic recovery, and the conclusions of this work will be presented to the Board in June.

Question 2 [Item 2.4 – Bus Reform Task Force]

The vision of the bus network is very laudable and when implemented will provide a solution in helping the transport infrastructure.

How are we working with other counties to get connectivity to out of county locations around the area, as this affects a number of communities around the county?

Response

As the business case is developed, specific proposals for the bus network will emerge towards the summer. At that point it will be possible to identify where there may be a particular need to consider cross-border issues and travel corridors. In the meantime, CPCA officers are establishing good working relationships with our neighbouring authorities to reassure them of our good intentions and to discuss how we can share cross-border responsibilities, and I look forward to this bearing fruit in due course.

Question 3 [Item 2.4 – Bus Reform Task Force]

When the scheme is set-up, what proposals are there for encouraging people out of the car and onto public transport. We can set the system up and show that it runs well, but what positive steps can we make to increase usage?

Response

In line with the Local Transport Plan policies, the Combined Authority aims to encourage more people to use public transport by making it a genuinely attractive alternative to the private car. The survey of bus users and non-users carried out during the winter showed that a frequent service, reliability and punctuality are the most important factors influencing passengers and potential passengers in their choice of bus travel. So I expect that the emerging proposals from the bus review will include ways of making improvements to frequency, reliability and punctuality. As the work develops, there will also be scope to look at fares and fare structures, including designing specific ticketing arrangements that can encourage more people to use the bus by incentivising – for example - more regular use, or travel in groups. This work will, however, need to take into account the likely short-term disruption to fare revenue and passenger behaviour as services gradually return to a steady state after the Covid lockdown period.