



**CAMBRIDGESHIRE  
& PETERBOROUGH**  
COMBINED AUTHORITY

<b>CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH COMBINED AUTHORITY BOARD</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM No: 3.3</b>
<b>25 SEPTEMBER 2019</b>	<b>PUBLIC REPORT</b>

## **PUBLIC TRANSPORT TO SERVE ALCONBURY**

### **1.0 PURPOSE**

- 1.1. This report seeks Board approval to take forward work on public transport provision at Alconbury within the overall project on the Cambridge Autonomous Metro (CAM), pursuing low-carbon rapid transit provision between Alconbury, Huntingdon and Cambridge as a key objective.
- 1.2. To advise the Board on the current position in relation to the future potential of heavy rail.
- 1.3. Approval is sought for continued collaborative engagement with Urban and Civic, Homes England, Department for Transport (DfT) and Network Rail (NR) to develop transport solutions to support and enhance the future housing and economic growth of Alconbury Weald through the provision of enhanced public transport solutions.

<b><u>DECISION REQUIRED</u></b>	
<b>Lead Member:</b>	<b>Mayor James Palmer</b>
<b>Lead Officer:</b>	<b>Paul Raynes, Director of Delivery &amp; Strategy</b>
<b>Forward Plan Ref: n/a</b>	<b>Key Decision: No</b>
The Combined Authority Board is recommended to:  a) Approve the removal of the project titled Alconbury Station from the Key Projects list and to include public transport to serve Alconbury within the scope of the CAM Key Project.	<b>Voting arrangements</b>  A simple majority

## **2.0 BACKGROUND**

### **Public Transport at Alconbury Weald**

- 2.1. Initial discussions on a railway station at Alconbury Weald began before MoD transferred the Alconbury site into private ownership (2009), as part of understanding its potential as a major centre for employment and housing.
- 2.2. Core public transport links are a prerequisite of the sustainable development approach, and the proximity of rail connection to London and Peterborough, alongside Guided Bus to Cambridge became part of the developers' core vision.
- 2.3. Consultation on the shape of the development, and how it could fit with core local priorities (2010-12) established a transport framework which included:
  - (a) Discussions on a heavy rail station on the East Coast main line;
  - (b) Feeding into Cambridgeshire Guided Busway planning around an off-road direct route from St Ives, via Alconbury then to Huntingdon and Peterborough, or after Huntingdon on the way to Peterborough, depending on off-road route options using the A1123/A141.
- 2.4. As a result of this, the Outline Application for Alconbury Weald was submitted in 2012 and consented in 2014 with:
  - (a) One transport hub located adjacent to the East Coast Mainline: acting as an interchange between cycle/pedestrian and car routes within the development and the rail and Guided Busway (marked with bus/train symbols in the map below)
  - (b) One transport hub at the main Town Centre, supporting the Enterprise Zone, with a Guided or prioritised bus / shuttle bus, and cycle and pedestrian connections from the new station and connecting on south east to Huntingdon, St Ives and Cambridge, and from Peterborough to the north – marked with the Alconbury A symbol overleaf.
  - (c) A central transport spine running through the centre of the development focussing on prioritised or guided bus lane and cycleways, running alongside, but quicker than a central Boulevard road.
  - (d) These connections also focussed transport through main access points on the strategic highways of the A141, A14 and A1, away from local villages.



## Rail station – progress to date

- 2.5. From 2014 through to 2019, the developer has continued to work with Network Rail and DfT to explore options from a turnaround facility which enabled slower trains to make way for fast trains to overtake using the existing track system, through to the full four-tracking investment plans. They have developed detailed plans for the station, station car park, and onward transport connections and worked with rail partners on detailed track, platform and connection options. However, it is clear that the current cost estimates and complexities associated with the four track proposals make that unaffordable at this stage and further work is required to progress the station in the longer term.
- 2.6. It is proposed that the Combined Authority continue a dialogue with all parties, including DfT and Network Rail, to explore solutions along the East Coast Main Line that would enable both strategic traffic and a potential new local connection at Alconbury.

## **Buses and rapid transit – the CAM option**

- 2.7. The developer's plans for roads and junctions on the Alconbury site are intended to adapt to changing technologies, including the potential for the Cambridge Autonomous Metro vehicles. The developer has also worked with the County Council and Stagecoach on plans for the potential extension of the Guided Busway, both for off-routes and on-road prioritisation systems. The bus strategy for the site sees an increasing frequency from the current hourly service, to three an hour by 2021. Alongside that, continued working on the wider transport infrastructure aims to enable a more frequent shuttle service between core destinations in later phases. That could be delivered by bus or Metro options.
- 2.8. The aspiration remains for a public transport spine which is reliable and frequent enough to create real behaviour change in the way people commute and access local facilities. Significant travel planning support is underway to support residents and businesses on site to shift from car use, and this shift is monitored on an annual basis. Clarity on the public transport connections going forward is a key part of delivering the shared ambition for modal shift for both residents and businesses at Alconbury Weald.

## **3. NEXT STEPS**

- 3.1. It is recommended that the Combined Authority continue discussions with Network Rail and DfT in relation to the provision of a station and tracks for Alconbury affordably whilst still enabling mainline enhancement.
- 3.2. At the same time, Alconbury Weald's growth and future transport needs will be considered in current and future transport studies in the North Huntingdon area, such as the Bus Reform study, the Local Transport Plan, the A141 study, Huntingdon Third River crossing study, which looks at the links between the A141 and the A14.
- 3.3. Discussions with partners have identified the potential to serve Alconbury Weald with a spur of the planned Cambridge Autonomous Metro (CAM) network coming up from St Ives or Huntingdon central. This would build on the developer's existing work on public transport links, and may identify a deliverable solution that would both complement a future heavy rail station on the East Coast main line, might be deliverable earlier, and could be delivered by local partners without the need for the involvement of national agencies. It is therefore recommended that the Combined Authority should pursue the feasibility of a CAM option to serve Alconbury Weald, and do so as part of the Cam Key Project.

## **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1. There are no financial implications at this stage.

## 5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. The Combined Authority assumed the role of the Local Transport Authority by virtue of Article 8 of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Order 2017. The Combined Authority must exercise the statutory functions of the local transport authority under Part II Local Transport Act 2000 and Parts 4 & 5 of the Transport Act 1985 so as to achieve effective and efficient transport within the area.

## 6. OTHER SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. There are no other significant implications.

## 7. RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE BOARD

- 7.1. The Board is recommended to:
- a) Approve the removal of the key project titled Alconbury Station and to include public transport to serve Alconbury within the scope of the CAM project.

## 8. APPENDICES

None.

<b><u>Background Papers</u></b>	<b><u>Location</u></b>
Long Tern Transport Strategy	<a href="https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/travel-roads-and-parking/transport-plans-and-policies/long-term-transport-strategy/">https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/travel-roads-and-parking/transport-plans-and-policies/long-term-transport-strategy/</a>