

Appendix B

QUESTIONS FROM OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE TO THE TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE 06/03/20

- 1) The report suggests that National Rail seems the best option in terms of VFM, but appears to have one major weakness compared to the light rail option, namely the lack of a station at the Garden Village.

What compromise can be achieved to avoid thousands of short journeys, which would have a knock-on effect on the Town Centre station.

RESPONSE

It is the ambition of the Combined Authority to enable Wisbech and the north Cambridgeshire area to have equal access to opportunities within Cambridgeshire and promote inward investment. It is intended that the Wisbech Rail project will significantly contribute to the sustainable growth of Wisbech. Alongside the development of Wisbech Rail the project team will liaise closely with the bus reform task force to consider services within Wisbech and serving the station. As the Wisbech Garden Town further develops additional rail links and services may become a consideration.

- 2) The report mentions that the £200m approved by DfT was for Control Period 6 ending in 2024. The report mentions potential cost increases for the project, but is that funding in jeopardy if the scheme is not delivered within that time. The report on Wisbech Rail mentions 2038 for through trains, so is that the likely timeline for completion? Ely North is the key to getting container freight off the A14 and contribute to reducing our carbon footprint.

RESPONSE

As with all options resulting from a Strategic Outline Business Case, all funding is subject to change according to stage development and resulting options. The additional £200m challenge for delivery within Control Period 6, will equally be subject to options that are deliverable, feasible and affordable.

As alluded to in the question, the challenges at Ely are complex, but any solutions would indeed contribute greatly to the decarbonisation agenda, by potentially removing container freight from Heavy Goods Vehicles currently traversing our region,

notably the A14 corridor.

Additional passenger train paths per hour are equally important to our region and the wider network, and it is our intention to secure as many of these paths as possible, at the earliest opportunity, to extend the Wisbech Rail from March with a continuous route to Cambridge, but also to enable additional stopping services at Whittlesea, March and Manea.