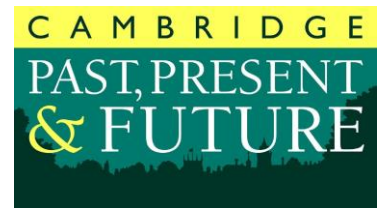


Greater Cambridge Partnership

By email to:

consultations@greatercambridge.org.uk



Cambridge Past, Present & Future
Wandlebury Country Park
Cambridge CB22 3AE

Phone 01223 - 243830

www.cambridgeppf.org

14/12/2021

Dear Greater Cambridge Partnership

Response to Making Connections consultation Autumn 2021

Cambridge Past, Present & Future is Cambridge's largest civic society. We are a charity run by local people who are passionate about where they live. We operate in the greater Cambridge area and working with our members, supporters and volunteers we:

- Are dedicated to protecting and enhancing the green setting of Cambridge for people and nature.
- Care about Cambridge and are an independent voice for quality of life in the strategic planning of Greater Cambridge.
- Are working to protect, celebrate and improve the important built heritage of the Cambridge area.
- Own and care for green spaces and historic buildings in and around the city for people and nature, including Wandlebury Country Park, Coton Countryside Reserve, Cambridge Leper Chapel & Barnwell Meadows, Bourn Windmill and Hinxtton Watermill.

Cambridge Past, Present & Future welcome the opportunity to comment on this city access consultation and our response is set out below. The final proposals will have a significant impact on those who live, work or visit the city. After years of abstract debate, we are pleased to see a more serious and open public discussion that considers some of the options available to improve the city environment. However, the proposals for buses raise significant concerns regarding potential impacts on heritage, landscape and the environment.

Landscape, Ecology & Heritage

1. The proposed city bus network is based on a large number of radial routes into central Cambridge. Based on the figures provided in the consultation material, this would result in at least 100 buses per hour in the city centre between 7am and 7pm and a significant risk of nose to tail buses along historic streets (see appendix 1 at end of letter).
2. Do the roads in the historic centre of Cambridge have capacity to cope with this number of buses without detrimental impact on the nationally significant heritage? A Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) must be undertaken, so that you have an understanding of the impact of the proposals on the heritage of Cambridge and can amend your proposals to avoid and minimise the impact. An HIA may require the considerations of alternatives, which reduce the number of buses in the city's historic core such as the 'lollipop' bus routeing promoted by Smarter Cambridge Transport, or the size of the bus vehicles being used in the fleet (smaller vehicles would have less impact on the historic streets).
3. We object to the GCP's preferred routes for the proposed busways that would be built between Cambourne and Cambridge, and between A11 and Cambridge Biomedical Campus. They will have significant negative impacts on landscape, heritage and ecology by building new roads through open countryside. CambridgePPF has submitted viable alternative routes which use the existing road corridor and avoid the significant harm to landscape, heritage and ecology. See for example

<https://www.cambridgeppf.org/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=19b623a9-920d-425e-b8bd-41f2c95dc0fd>

4. We have raised similar concerns regarding the proposal to build new bus roads to the North and East of Cambridge.

Environment

5. The proposals need to ensure that they will result in an improvement to air quality. We are concerned that the significant increase in buses could result in reduced air quality. Are the measures sufficient considering the number of buses moving around the city in addition to the cars which inevitably will still be driven in the city. The consultation mentions funding for 30 electric buses, but your proposal will need well over 100 buses, meaning that at the outset 70% of buses will contribute towards poor air quality. How long will it be before all the buses are electric? Is having an electric bus fleet practical with the distances they need to travel and the need for charging? Have you modelled likely air pollution resulting from your proposals?

Better cycling and walking

6. We support the provision of better cycling and walking routes and we are concerned that the significant increase in the number of buses within the city is in direct conflict with the aim to increase active travel. People will only walk or cycle if they feel they can do so safely. The historic streets of the city centre cannot be widened. The Making Space for People report has already highlighted that a number of city centre streets are at capacity and they provide a poor environment for pedestrians sharing them with public transport, taxis, etc. Particular streets of concern are Pembroke Street, St Andrews Street, Christ's Lane, Hobson Street, Downing Street, Trumpington Street, Bridge Street, Jesus Lane and Silver Street.

Earlier this year we responded to your consultation on Cycling Plus to highlight that there is no strategy for cross city cycling given that the Making Space for People report has identified that there is not sufficient street capacity in the city centre to accommodate the increase in people that will arise from growth in the current Local Plan.

At the present time it is impossible for us to see how the constrained spaces of historic city centre streets can successfully accommodate large numbers of buses, more cyclists and more pedestrians in an attractive and safe environment. This challenge must be addressed as a priority because it is not acceptable for publicly accountable bodies to promise this "nirvana" without a plan which demonstrates it is achievable.

Public Spaces

7. Whilst we support efforts to improve the public realm we would like to raise concerns that the consultation overstates the public benefits that might arise from the proposals. The consultation refers to improving areas of public open space, mentioning specifically Mitcham's Corner and East Road/Regents Street junction. These are small areas that will always be negatively impacted by their locations at busy junctions, in both cases there are large attractive public spaces very close by which people will always use in preference (Jesus Green and Parker's Piece respectively). The suggestions in your consultation are not considered to give significant added value to the proposal and misleadingly suggest a 'green agenda' when the overall effects of the proposal are detrimental (ie through the busways programme).

Funding transport improvements

8. The consultation refers to reducing the number of parking spaces as a means to reallocate road space but this has not been considered as a significant element of the proposals. Reducing the number of car parking spaces will force people to use public transport or active travel which will reduce congestion and

provide public transport passengers to fund those services. This approach has been successfully applied in other cities such as Copenhagen. One of the main risks of your proposals is that drivers decide to pay a charge rather than change their behaviour, this would result in mainly empty buses and little change to congestion. The advantage of reducing car parking spaces is that it is guaranteed to reduce car traffic. Any attempts to reduce car parking spaces would need to be accompanied by an expansion of resident's parking to cover most of the city.

9. The consultation proposes an 'either/or' option to charging. We would encourage you to consider whether a 'hybrid' option could be best, for example a road charge combined with a reduction in car parking spaces, or an all-day pollution charge within the city centre combined with a peak-hours charge outside the city centre.
10. The consultation documents do not distinguish between work-place parking and public parking.
11. Whilst we accept some of the possible down-sides that a work-place parking might have, we feel that this also has some advantages which are not described. In particular:
 - it is likely to be more politically achievable;
 - businesses can respond in way that individuals cannot (for example supporting their staff);
 - it will be easier to deal with exceptions to a work-place parking levy than individual exceptions. For example, dealing with one employer of key workers (such as NHS premises) rather than dealing with every key worker employee at that premises.
12. There are significant areas of parking associated business parks on the fringes of the city (Cambridge Biomedical Campus, West Cambridge, Science Park and Fulbourn Road/Cambridge Road) and traffic to these locations contributes to congestion on arterial roads and carbon emissions. CambridgePPF believes that these should be included in any city-wide charging or workplace parking scheme, especially as proposed improvements to public transport are designed to serve these locations.
13. Consideration will need to be made for retail parks that have large areas of free parking. If charges are not applied to them but charges are applied to the city centre, then out-of-centre businesses could be at a significant trading advantage, to the detriment of the High Street. There is also a risk that people will park here and walk into the centre. Large areas of surface parking relatively close to the centre is not a good use of land within Cambridge and your proposals could play a role in making it more attractive for landowners to look at using their land more effectively (as is being proposed for the next Local Plan).
14. We have concerns about the strategy of applying a pollution charge. We agree with the negative effects identified in the consultation – as vehicles become cleaner it is not a viable long-term approach and it discriminates against those who cannot afford modern cars or cannot pay the charge.
15. The consultation refers to charging zones covering the city centre but it does not define what is meant by the city centre. This will mean different things to different people and has the potential to invalidate the consultation responses.

Bus Network Proposals

16. To those travelling a longer distance to Cambridge, the bus and rail services need to complement each other. The train and bus timetables need to be integrated. It is important to introduce some form of shared ticketing that enables passengers to move between train and bus on the same ticket/card (such as in London) because this would make it an easier and more attractive journey. For those travelling to Cambridge by train, the proposals need to ensure that the first and last leg of people's journeys can also be made by public transport or active travel.

17. At the present time travelling across Cambridge by bus is often so expensive and slow that it is not viable, this is due to the need to change buses in the centre and purchase two tickets. We welcome proposals that will address this.
18. We strongly support the principle of providing better public transport for the Cambridge hinterland, especially as an alternative to Park & Ride. The latter contributes to congestion outside the city and is a net producer of carbon emissions. P&R also results in areas of green belt countryside covered in tarmac and becoming urbanised. We would hope that the proposals put forward will lead to a rethink about the size of new Park & Rides proposed for greater Cambridge.
19. Buses can only be part of the solution; in transport corridors served by rail there is also an urgent need for improvements to rail services, including more frequent services on the Cambridge to Newmarket/Bury line, as well as services that can reach Cambridge North and (in future) Cambridge South that don't involve changing in Cambridge. We know of a commuter who lives in Whittlesford and works on the Cambridge Science Park but drives to work even though both have train stations, the reason is that there is no service in the morning rush hour that doesn't involve changing at Cambridge central station.
20. Regarding rail stations, there is also a need for improvements to active and public transport travel to rail stations that serve Cambridge, including those outside greater Cambridge. A strategy which only seeks to deal with commuters once they enter greater Cambridge is one that is set to fail.
21. As well as buses, there also needs to be a strategy for coaches, which provide affordable inter-city travel. For example they won't be able to use the new busways because they won't have guidance systems.

Road Network – Avoiding Through Traffic

22. One of the main aims of your work is to reduce traffic within Cambridge. We believe that this objective could also be served by making it easier for through traffic to avoid coming into or close to the city by enabling the M11, A14 and A11 to act as an outer ring road. At present traffic movements around Cambridge are hampered by lack of slip roads at key junctions on the strategic road network. This results in additional traffic on minor roads. The inability to join the M11 south bound at the Girton Interchange (J14) means additional traffic on Madingley Road going to Junction 13. The inability at Junction 9 of the M11 to go north or leave from the north increases congestion on the A505/A1301. The inability to access the A14 when north bound on the A11 results in traffic exiting the A11 at Six Mile Bottom and travelling through the villages. We would like to see these improvements considered as part of the overall package of measures to reduce traffic and congestion in the Cambridge area.

I trust that you will take our comments into consideration.

Yours sincerely



James Littlewood
Chief Executive

APPENDIX 1

Starting settlement for journey to Cambridge	Bus frequency per hour between 7am – 7pm
Waterbeach	4
Cottenham	6
Ely	4

Newmarket	6
Newmarket Rd P&R	6
Cherry Hinton	12
Haverhill	4
A11 travel hub	8
Granta Park / Babraham Research Campus	4
Royston	6
Saffron Walden	6
Cambourne	6
St Neots	4
St Ives	12
Huntingdon	6
Bar Hill	6
TOTAL	100