

Greater Cambridge Partnership

By email to:

[consultations@greatercambridge.org.uk](mailto:consultations@greatercambridge.org.uk)

21/12/2022

Dear GCP

### Response to Making Connections 2022 survey

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 Hinxton Watermill.

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Cambridge Past, Present and Future agrees that action is needed to reduce congestion and in principle we support measures to reduce single occupancy car journeys where and when there is congestion, subject to the impacts of such measures on heritage, landscape and the environment and on our charitable activities and service users.

We have split our response in two. The first relates to the potential impact of the proposals on our charitable activities and service users. The second relates to impacts on heritage, landscape and the environment.

### Summary

A 7am-7pm Mon-Fri congestion charge would have a significant impact on our charity and its service users. For this reason, **we object to this proposal**. The significant impact could be avoided if the charge did not apply between 10.30am-3pm and therefore we could support a charge which applied **only during 7am-10am**.

We are yet to see any evidence that a significant increase in buses in the historic centre can be achieved without detrimental impacts on heritage and active travellers. For this reason, we reserve our position until such time as detailed plans are put forward which show how conflicts between buses, heritage and active travellers will be avoided.

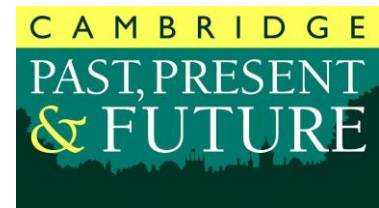
### 1. Response regarding impact on the charity and its service users

*Q.12 Do you have any comments on the proposed hours of operation of the Sustainable Travel Zone (STZ)?*

*Q.18. Impacts on your organisation*

*Q.19. Impact on people or groups with protected characteristics*

The two main public benefits provided by our charity are two country parks (at Wandlebury and Coton). Both are free to access, and both are located in the countryside on the edge of Cambridge. They were created to serve residents of the city but are located beyond the city boundary. This means that city residents would



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have to pay a charge to drive to them. There are two particular challenges, Wandlebury is located on top of a steep hill which limits the number of people able to cycle, and visitors to both sites often make journeys with young children, pets, picnics, etc which are very difficult to do on a cycle or by public transport.

In order to gain a better understanding of the likely impacts of the proposals on our charitable activities and service users, we carried out sample surveys of our service users during November and December 2022. The results of these surveys are provided in Appendix 1, in summary:

- A significant percentage of our service users are inside the charging zone and therefore potentially affected (75% of visitors; 54% of healthy walkers; 54% of volunteers)
- A high percentage of car drivers in the zone are likely to stop using our services or reduce their use of them. Potentially resulting in a c33% reduction in midweek service users from within the charge zone.
- Different user groups will be affected differently. People who are on lower incomes, people who are unable to cycle and people who need to transport items will be disproportionately affected. In other words, people who are on lower incomes, people who have health problems, people with children/pets – these are often the people who most benefit from the well-being provided by our parks. This has implications for social equality and well-being – in particular the ability (or willingness) of people to access the well-being benefits provided by our parks.
- As well as losing current service users, it will make it harder to attract new service users and volunteers from within the charging zone.

Very few of our service users travel to our country parks during rush hour. Peak visiting hours are 11am-2pm, when generally there is low congestion in Cambridge.

Our parks are very busy at weekends and the Wandlebury car park can often be full, for this reason we have been trying to encourage more mid-week visitors (e.g. by having a reduced car parking charge mid-week). An unintended consequence of the proposed congestion charge would be to reduce mid-week visits and increase visits at weekends – this would exacerbate an existing problem and likely result in the need to expand the size of car parking.

In summary, a 7am-7pm Mon-Fri congestion charge would have a significant impact on our charity and its service users. For this reason, **we object to this proposal**. The significant impact could be avoided if the charge did not apply between 10.30am-3pm and therefore we could support a charge which applied only during 7am-10am.

## **2. Response regarding impact on heritage, landscape and the environment**

### **Bus improvements**

*Q.1 To what extent do you support or oppose the proposals for bus improvements and fare reductions?*

Our concerns about the capacity of the historic centre of Cambridge to cope with the increased number of buses remains. Totalling the number of buses per hour as shown on your maps of connections to Cambridge City Centre indicates an increase from 81 buses per hour in the pre covid network to 119 buses per hour with the proposed improvements.

The consultation on the Road Classification (July 2022) recognised that the Making Connections proposals would result in the St Andrew's Street, Drummer Street and Emmanuel Street interchange area reaching capacity and would struggle to take the proposed increased number of buses. This is recognised as a dependency in the Strategic Outline Case. We are disappointed that there is no indication as to how this is going to be resolved. Reference is made to travel hubs at key locations. It is unclear as to whether this is to relieve pressure on the city centre bus interchange.

The city centre reaching capacity would have a detrimental impact on 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 and by sharing them with buses, they will provide a poor environment for pedestrians and cyclists. 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.

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. The GCP must demonstrate that this is achievable

A Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) must be undertaken, so that you have an understanding of the impact of the proposals on the world class heritage of central 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.

We question how realistic your timetable is and are concerned about the financial implications of any delays.

In order to meet your timetable, you need to be confident that you have sufficient resources to manage all the major workstreams in parallel. These include designing, consulting on, making and implementing the Enhanced Partnership and Road User Charging Scheme order, presenting your case at the public inquiries on the busways, designing and delivering the new Waterbeach railway station, reconfiguring bus routing in the city and delivering other projects on active travel, City Access and transport hubs.

The timeline as shown in your brochure does not seem to take into account the 2 years needed to make the Enhanced Partnership prior to delivering the lower fares in early 2024, nor a realistic amount of time to make the Road User Charging Scheme order before phasing in the Sustainable Travel Zone (STZ) charge from 2025.

Any delay in making the Enhanced Partnership will require a postponement of the STZ, since the premiss of that is that viable public transport options must be available first. This will have significant cost implications once contractors have been engaged to deliver and administer the STZ.

Any delay in making the Road User Charging Scheme order after the GCP has started to commit money to support bus services will inevitably increase the size of the "bridging loan" to be provided by the GCP (SOC Table 3.11)

*Q.2 Do you have any comments on the proposals for:*

- *Cheaper fares*
- *More routes?*
- *Fast, high frequency services?*
- *Longer operating hours?*
- *Increased rural services?*
- *Simpler ticketing*
- *Zero emission bus services?*

We support an improved bus service which reaches more settlements and offers a fast and frequent service. However, we do not support the provision of the Cambourne to Cambridge busway and the Cambridge South East Transport busway as a means of providing this. If the Making Connections proposals is successful and you achieve the 50% reduction in traffic, this will free up the roads for buses negating the need for segregated busways. We consider that there are viable alternatives within the corridor of main arterial roads which deliver similar transport benefits without the damage to the countryside and at a much lower cost to taxpayers.

We strongly support the introduction of electric buses and the program of replacing the buses should be maintained until they are all electric.

We note reference in the consultation to 10,000 additional Park and Ride spaces. Please clarify whether these are additional spaces over and above those already in the public domain. We would object to further loss of Green Belt land to Park & Ride.

### **Cycling, walking and other improvements**

*Q.6. To what extent do you support or oppose additional improvements to walking and cycling, accessibility and public spaces?*

We support the provision of better cycling and walking routes, BUT 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.

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. The GCP must demonstrate that this is achievable.

We support the planned provision of the greenways.

### **Delivering improvements – a sustainable Travel Zone (STZ)**

*Q.8 Do you have any comments on the proposal to introduce a Sustainable Travel Zone?*

In principle, we support measures to reduce single occupancy car journeys where and when there is congestion, subject to the impacts of such measures on heritage, landscape and the environment and on our charitable activities and service users. See other answers.

### **Designing the Sustainable Travel Zone:**

*Q.11 Do you have any feedback on the proposed Zone and its boundary?*

We consider that reducing the number of car parking spaces within the Zone should be considered as a significant element of the proposal. 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. Or we would prefer to see a work place parking levy, such as in Nottingham, which better focusses on the cause of the problem (commuter traffic) without unintended consequences for other travellers.

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.

The results of our survey indicate that for non-commuting journeys very few people will change their mode of travel as a result of a congestion charge, instead they are more likely to change their behaviour by not doing activities, doing them less or, for those that can afford it, simply paying the charge. Many people who can cycle or use public transport are already doing so.

I trust that you will take our comments into consideration.

Yours sincerely



James Littlewood, Chief Executive

## Appendix 1

### Results from sample surveys of service users to Wandlebury Country Park and Coton Reserve regarding congestion charge proposals

Surveys were carried out in Nov and Dec 2022. Service users were given a questionnaire and asked to complete it. Surveys were anonymous, with no personal data requested. Survey forms are appended.

#### 1. Healthy Walkers\* (no. 28 surveyed)

54% would be in charge zone, of those:

43% said they would stop coming (=23% of all walkers)

23% said they would come less (= 13% of all walkers)

20% said they would change how they travelled (= 11% of all walkers)

The implication of this is that we could see an immediate reduction of at least 25% per week.

A particular issue is that the organiser would be one of those who might stop coming.

Of the 28 surveyed, 89% travel by car and 11% by bus. Given the nature of the group (elderly/health conditions), it is not surprising that 43% cited health/mobility as a reason for driving. Cycling is not an option for this user group for health reasons.

[\*Healthy Walkers are a group of people that meet to walk together. The aim is to help maintain or improve their fitness and well-being. Some of the people attending are referred by their GP. They walk in a group for reasons of safety (e.g. in case they have a fall) and social well-being. Many of the people who attend are elderly. They meet once a week at Wandlebury. The walks are organised and administered by volunteers. Attendance at the walks averages around 35 people per week.]

#### 2. Volunteers (no 26 surveyed)

54% would be in the charge zone, of those:

14% said they would stop coming (=7% of all volunteers)

29% said they would come less (= 15% of all vols)

7% said they would change how they travelled.

31% of volunteers travel by cycle/walk and therefore would not be affected.

If we only consider volunteers that live in the charge zone and drive (9 in total), then 66% (6 out of 9) of those said they would stop or come less. 22% (2 out of 9) said they would pay the charge rather than change their behaviour and 11% (1 out of 9) said they would cycle rather than drive.

This group are coming to the park to take part in strenuous activity and therefore they would be fit enough for cycling to be an option. Several of those at Coton live nearby.

The implication is that our volunteer programme would be negatively affected but not significantly (perhaps a 10% reduction).

Given the views of volunteers in the zone who drive a car, we would find it much harder to recruit new volunteers from within the charging zone, especially those who are unable/unwilling to cycle.

### 3. Guided walk participants

We received survey forms from 4 people taking part in a guided walk. This sample size is too small to draw any conclusions, however:

3 of these lived in the charge zone (75%). Of these, 1 cycled, 1 came by bus and 1 by car. The car driver indicated they might sometimes pay a charge and sometimes change their mode of travel.

### 4. Visitors (no 16 surveyed)

16 visitors were surveyed. This is a small sample size given the number of visitors (due to weather conditions/resources of collecting data).

12 (75%) would be in the charge zone, of those:

33% said they would stop coming on a weekday (=25% of all visitors)

33% said they would come less on a weekday (= 25% of all visitors)

33% said they would not change behaviour (=25% of all visitors)

0% said they would change how they travelled.

Of those 12, 92% (=11) arrived by car.

The reasons for arriving by car were different for this group of services users, with 31% citing carrying something as the reason for driving (mainly dogs and children where this was specified), compared to 11% of other service users. Potentially it would be harder for this group of service users to switch their mode of transport.

The implication of this data is that we might expect to see a reduction of midweek visitors by at least 30%. We didn't ask them whether they might instead visit on a weekend, so it is not known whether this would result in a total loss of visitors or a displacement to the weekend.

It is not possible for us to survey people outside the congestion zone to find out whether they might visit Wandlebury instead of going into Cambridge. If that were to happen, it is also not known whether the volume would offset that which is lost. In our sample, 75% of visitors were from within the charge zone, which is very high.

### 5. Other findings

Only a small number of people (8%) said they would change their mode of travel as a result of a congestion charge. A much higher number (32%) said they would change their behaviour in other ways, for example stopping coming to Wandlebury (16%) or coming less (16%). When this is applied to car drivers the percentage is much higher.

We asked all visitors why they chose their method of transport (regardless of whether they were in the charging zone or not). People could select multiple reasons. Speed and reliability were the most common reasons (27 responses each). Many people said that driving was the only realistic option in terms of journey time due to the distance and the fact that they would need to take more than 1 bus service to get to Wandlebury (in other words, even if the bus service was made quicker the overall journey would be slower).

### 6. Conclusions

- A significant percentage of our service users are inside the charging zone and therefore potentially affected (75% of visitors; 54% of healthy walkers; 54% of volunteers)

- Different user groups will be affected differently. People who are on lower incomes, people who are unable to cycle and people who need to transport items will be disproportionately affected. This has implications for social equality and well-being – in particular the ability (or willingness) of people to access the well-being benefits provided by our charity.
- A high percentage of car drivers in the zone are likely to stop using our services or reduce their use of them. Potentially resulting in a c33% reduction in midweek service users from within the charge zone.
- As well as losing current service users, it will make it harder to attract new service users from within the charging zone.

## Survey Forms

### Cambridge Congestion Charge – Survey for CPPF

A consultation is underway asking for people's views on a Cambridge Congestion Charge. The charge would be £5 per day and apply to anyone driving into or out of Cambridge (this covers all of the city including the suburbs). It would operate from 7am to 7pm Monday-Friday.

CPPF is trying to understand what the implications of the congestion charge might mean for its charitable work. The charge would apply to people who live in Cambridge but wanted to visit Wandlebury or Coton Reserve during weekdays. This would include people such as volunteers, visitors, participants in activities and staff.

The £50m raised by the congestion charge would be invested in better and cheaper bus services. To reach Wandlebury and Coton from Cambridge would cost £2 each way (i.e. £4). There is already a direct service to Wandlebury from centre/Hills Road/A1307 but there would not be any other direct services. Buses run from centre to Coton village but no service to Coton Reserve car park.

We would be really grateful if you could answer a few short questions:

**1. Which CPPF site are you at today?**

Wandlebury                  Coton Reserve

**2. Do you live in Cambridge?**                  Yes    No

**3. What method of transport have you used to reach our site?** (select any that apply)

Walk                  Cycle                  Bus                  Car                  Other

**3. What is the main method of transport you use to reach this site?** (select only one)

Walk                  Cycle                  Bus                  Car                  Other

**4. Why do you use that method of transport?**

- Health/mobility reasons
- Cost reasons
- Reliability of journey
- Speed of journey



- Transporting items
- Other reasons (please write in):

**5. What is your reason for being here today?**

- Volunteering
- Healthy Walking
- Take part in an activity

***If you answered “No” to question 2, please do not answer any more questions.***

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**6. If a £5 congestion charge was introduced, would you** (select the one that most applies)?

- Stop coming to this site to do the activity you are taking part in?
- Come to this site less often to do the activity you are taking part in?
- Carry on as normal and pay the charge?
- Continue to come but change how you travel to avoid paying the charge?

**Thank you for taking the time to answer these questions.**

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CPPF is trying to understand what the implications of the congestion charge might mean for its charitable work. The charge would apply to people who live in Cambridge but wanted to visit Wandlebury during weekdays.

The £50m raised by the congestion charge would be invested in better and cheaper bus services. To reach Wandlebury from Cambridge would cost £2 each way (i.e. £4). There is already a direct service to Wandlebury from centre/Hills Road/A1307 but there would not be any other direct services.

We would be really grateful if you could answer a few short questions:

**1. Do you live in Cambridge?**                      Yes    No

**2. What method of transport have you used to reach Wandlebury?** (select any that apply)

Walk                      Cycle                      Bus                      Car                      Other

**3. Why did you use that method of transport?**

- Health/mobility reasons



- Cost reasons
- Reliability of journey
- Speed of journey
- Transporting items
- Other reasons (please write in):

***If you answered “No” to question 1, please do not answer any more questions.***

***4. If a £5 congestion charge was introduced, would you*** (select the one that most applies)?

- Stop coming to Wandlebury on a weekday?
- Come to Wandlebury less often on a weekday?
- Drive and pay the charge?
- Continue to come but change how you travel to avoid paying the charge?
- Carry on as normal because you don't arrive by car?

**Thank you for taking the time to answer these questions.**