

Draft Notes – Cambourne to Cambridge Local Liaison Forum

Date: Wednesday 14th November 2018

Time: 6.30pm

Venue: Large Performance Hall, Comberton Village College, West Street, Comberton, Cambridge, CB23 7DU

Representation From:

Greater Cambridge Partnership

Peter Blake – Transport Director

Laura Gates – Communications Manager

Debbie Goodland – Community Engagement Manager

Michaela Headland – Communications and Engagement Officer

Lesley Hoyle – Events Officer

Mott MacDonald

Jo Baker, Development Manager

Cambourne to Cambridge Local Liaison Forum

Elsworth Parish Council

Bourn Parish Council

Caldecote Parish Council

Hardwick Parish Council

Coton Parish Council

Barton Parish Council

Grantchester Parish Council

Comberton Parish Council

South Trumpington Parish Councils

Madingley Road Residents' Association

North Newnham Residents' Association

South Newnham Residents' Association

Cranmer Road Residents' Association

Gough Way Residents' Associations

District Councillors (Harston and Comberton, Caldecote); County Councillor (Hardwick); two City Councillors (Newnham) and three local environmental organisations.

Open and Welcome – Chair, Helen Bradbury

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm.

The Chair welcomed Peter Blake and Jo Baker who would be presenting at the meeting, and Cllr Aiden Van de Weyer from the GCP Executive Board.

Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of last meeting had been previously approved the Chair. The Chair asked that they be added to the GCP web site.

Revised Terms of Reference

The Chair introduced the Revised Terms of Reference for LLFs as a means to provide consistency across all GCP LLFs. It was noted that the Chair and Vice Chair are elected for 1 year only.

Election of Officials

Helen Bradbury was nominated as Chair and the vote carried.

Philip Allen was nominated as Vice Chair and the vote was carried.

Request for 1 new member – Time Scott, The Countryside Restoration Trust

There was a motion to elect the Countryside Restoration Trust to the LLF and the vote was carried.

Brief Update from Chair:

All questions presented to GCP at the meeting will receive a full written response and these will be posted on the website.

In summary, the LLF last met in September 2017. The Mayor of the Combined Authority paused the project while there was a review of GCP transport schemes to align with the Mayor's aspirations for the Cambridgeshire Autonomous Metro (CAM). In September 2018 the Mayor asked GCP to continue with the Cambourne to Cambridge scheme, whilst ensuring scheme compliance with CAM.

Mott MacDonald has recommend a route for the scheme which the LLF has considered not to be the best option.

Cambourne to Cambridge Public Transport Route – Project Update

A presentation was made by Peter Blake, GCP Transport Director and Jo Baker, Development Manager of Mott Macdonald. This can be found at:

<https://www.greatercambridge.org.uk/transport/transport-projects/cambourne-to-cambridge/cambourne-to-cambridge-llf/>

In a change to the published agenda, the Chair invited questions from the LLF for Mott MacDonald:

Q – How have you come to the conclusion that an off-road route is the better option for the environment?

A – Officers have gone through the appropriate assessment as advised by the department for Transport (DfT). A full environmental impact assessment will be undertaken as part of the Full Business Case. Advice has been taken from Natural England in terms of assessing the ecological sensitivity of sites. We are aware of significant local wildlife, any impact of the scheme would be compensated by reinstating planting.

Response from LLF – LLF members remain unconvinced that the off-road route can possibly be a better ecological solution than a bus lane on an existing road. Asked to see the Natural England advice.

Comment from the LLF - Using Natural England is a long way from having a full environmental survey. The LLF believes the environmental report to be very poor quality. Reference to the workshops does not validate the options made and the off road option was massively opposed at these events.

Q – From the economic analysis it appears that the benefits of the off road option are 8 times that of the on road option, and local growth benefit 4 times greater. How is this?

A – The bulk is travel time saving.

Response from LLF – The LLF was not invited to be part of this analysis. What is the saving?

A – There is a saving of 5-7 minutes travel time along the proposed route.

Q - Will the analysis be shared with the LLF so that it can be independently assessed?

A – Yes, we will aim to share it on our website.

Q – Has there been a change of scope between Phase 1 and 2?

A – No, the definition of Phase and 1 and 2 have always been clear, as per the consultation. Phase 1 covers the route section between Cambridge and Madingley Mulch, and Phase 2 continues the route from Madingley Mulch to Cambourne. The next business case for approval by GCP is aimed for October 2019 and will be an updated document, including a plan which will show key developments. Suggestions for the West Fields are not part of this phase.

Q – You refer to future proofing the scheme and aligning with CAM, however CAM at this stage is an aspiration. Is it not the case that you are looking to build an off road option to align with an aspiration that may or may not happen?

A – CAM is not a committed scheme. The majority of the Cambourne to Cambridge scheme is required before CAM is developed. The CPIER report makes clear the immediate economic implications if transport infrastructure is not put in place, so there is a risk to the region in waiting for CAM before proceeding with other transport infrastructure schemes.

Questions Submitted in Advance by LLF Members, Including Questions from the General Public

It was reiterated that full written responses to each of the questions submitted will be provided and also published on the GCP web site at <https://www.greatercambridge.org.uk/transport/transport-projects/cambourne-to-cambridge/cambourne-to-cambridge-llf/>

In addition to the answers provided, the following comments were made:

Question 1 - Question from LLF Technical Group

It was commented that the technical group met with GCP officers a number of times and it is felt that this work has been ignored and that the views of the public have been put aside. Concern was expressed about the lack of evidence for the scheme, and that journey times into the City have not been provided.

In response Mott MacDonald explained the project team will continue to follow the stipulated government process.

The Chair asked if the Project Team will continue to work with the LLF. The response was yes, the team are willing to continue with the dialogue and will continue to outline the evidence in advance of any decisions for the scheme end to end.

The Chair commented that it will come as a surprise to some locals that the schemed route will end at Grange Road.

Question 2 – From Steve Jones, Convenor of the Coalition of 23 Parish Councils

The coalition of 23 Parish Councils have held their own transport survey of 300 residents. Based upon the survey results, only 25% of Greater Cambourne residents' needs are being addressed with this scheme.

Mott MacDonald responded that the scheme is one component of a wider transport plan and stops at Grange Road, servicing the majority people travelling into greater Cambridge from the Greater Cambourne area.

Question 3 – From Philip Allen, District Councillor Comberton and Harston Ward

It was commented that the Oxford-Cambridge Expressway could come into Girton and the CAM could link up here too.

Officers confirmed that GCP will ask consultants to revisit the previous review of the Girton interchange routing and will provide that information in due course.

Mott MacDonald stressed that the business case would be assessed as a standalone scheme. The Mayor has stipulated that the scheme has to be compatible with CAM.

Concern was expressed that CAM compliance will bias the lower cost alternative because the Mayor has stipulated an off-road route.

Question 4.1 from Stephen Coates, Save West Fields

The LLF feels this question comes to the heart of the business case. Officers responded that GCP has no plans for Queen's Green at this stage. Concern was expressed regarding the impact of the potential number of busses that would travel on Silver Street as a result of this scheme. Officers responded that it is anticipated that 9 buses per hour will use Silver Street, not approx. 60 as suggested by the LLF.

The Chair commented that the LLF looks forward to receiving the written response to this question, as they are keen to have clarity around the volume of buses using Silver Street through modal shift.

The LLF shared that they have been informed that GCP has spoken to Highways England. If so and there is a change of information, this should be included in the report. Officers agreed.

Question 7 - from Markus Gehring, Ward Councillor, Newnham

Concern was raised that the questions being asked of GCP at this meeting are the same as those asked at the first City Deal meeting, that GCP is ignoring residents.

Officers responded that GCP has accurately followed the consultation process and is reporting accordingly. It was stressed that the business case process is not a public vote.

In response the LLF expressed their view that that LLF responses to the consultation had been ignored.

Question 8 - from Stephen Coates, Save the West Fields

If was commented from the LLF that it is believed that this consultation process has been a cynical one. Officers responded that GCP has tried to outline the process to this point, reiterating that a preferred option has not yet been selected and a decision will be made at a later date.

The LLF commented in response that GCP has presented 2 options, one of which will be selected. Are these the only 2 options that will be presented?

Officers responded that there is more work for GCP to undertake, including working with the Combined Authority and a phase 2 consultation, before presenting recommendations to the GCP Executive Board. The Board paper makes clear that the work is ongoing and GCP will continue to adhere to the national government process.

The LLF asked what criteria had been used to elect the route through Coton. Officers responded that a range of criteria was used, including traffic, environmental, the impact on greenbelt and economic

criteria. Under the proposals buses would not travel any closer to housing than they already do at present and these buses will be cleaner and quieter. It would also allow the route to have a stop at Coton.

The Chair questioned that people are at the bottom of the list of considerations. Officers responded that this is not accurate, the whole purpose of the scheme is to enhance living standards.

The LLF commented that as two options have been defined for the scheme, the decision about route alignment has already been made.

The Chair expressed concern that Coton Parish Council was not approached to discuss the route alignment.

Q8.2 from James Littlewood, Cambridge CPPF

Concern was expressed that there is bias in the board report in terms of what has been selected from the Arup report.

Officers responded that this is not the intention of GCP, and that this will be reviewed.

Q8 from Stephen Coates, Save the West Fields

The LLF is of the understanding that the Mayor is only concerned about a tunnel from West Cambridge to the City and asked if GCP is seeking to demolish properties and take agricultural land.

Officers responded that GCP is in technical discussions with the Combined Authority about tunnelling.

Additional questions were invited from the LLF and public:

Q – How do you manage the conflict with the University of Cambridge having representation on the GCP Executive Board?

A – GCP is basing the assessment of the scheme on those developments that are identified in the local plan.

Q – Last year the GCP Director of Transport informed the LLF that GCP would address the park and ride provision before determining the transport route. Why has this changed?

A – Initial park and ride sites were discussed, then GCP directed Mott MacDonald to just look at Phase 1 of this scheme because it was felt that park and ride should be considered for the whole route.

Q - It is painful that the LLF is not being listened to by GCP. The 2014 consultation was not listened to, the 2018 one the same. The democratic process must be questioned. Doesn't GCP have to provide an alternative route option that is legal and viable?

A - An alternative has to be provided, as part of the ongoing process.

The following comments were made by LLF members and the public:

- GCP has ignored that the public want to travel to lots of other destinations within the City and Greater Cambridge.
- There is the feeling that the off road route has been predetermined from the beginning. Given the Liberal Democrats are opposed to the scheme and will therefore veto it, GCP should start to find an alternative route the public can support.
- GCP should be informed that the public are against this proposal, and start telling the truth.

Chair's summary of the meeting, submitted to the Joint Assembly on 15th November 2018

Public Engagement

Despite the recent LLF review, the timing of LLF/JA meetings is such that the input from the LLF cannot be taken into serious consideration by the JA members. This is a missed opportunity to receive informed local input.

Question: Could the JA please consider allowing two weeks between the papers being published and the JA meeting?

What Value Public Consultation?

The LLF notes that that the GCP has proceeded with the route, and an alignment within that route, that was the most opposed in the public consultation earlier this year, and one that the LLF has repeatedly advised against.

Question: What does the GCP consider to be the value of public engagement when it appears to have no effect whatsoever?

Resolution 1: passed unanimously

The LLF recommends that no decision be taken on a preferred route until greater clarity on CAM is provided: the proposed network, connectivity and funding. As it currently stands, this off-line bus road, with its poor connectivity to the Cambridge Biomedical Campus, Science Park and the City Centre; its poor transport benefits and low BCR, does not stand up to scrutiny.

The idea of tunnels:

Whilst there was support in principle for tunnels, there was concern about their deliverability. There needs to be a degree of certainty about them before this route can be considered, for the following reasons:

The preferred route does not serve commuters from Cambourne and Bourn:

The Coalition of 23 Parish Councils has undertaken an extensive survey concerning where people work, and are about to embark on another one. 23% of people work in central Cambridge; 27% work on southern fringe (Addenbrooke's) or northern fringe (Science Park); 25% elsewhere in the district and 25% outside of the district. Only a very small proportion of people can benefit from this £156 million bus road.

Question: What will the GCP do for the large majority that cannot benefit?

The preferred off-road route provides very poor connectivity:

How the buses connect onwards to the city centre from Grange Road, and the heritage and congestion implications of that, are still unknown. Equally, and more importantly for commuters, it does not provide effective onward links to the Biomedical Campus or the Science Park. These links are better made by staying on road, or, potentially through a northern route (see below).

The transport benefits do not make sense to people:

The LLF technical group expressed concern that the adjusted BCR of this scheme is still 0.2 (one tenth of what is normally expected of public transport schemes), and journey times not markedly better than simple on-road alternatives.

The environmental assessment is considered flawed:

There was ongoing concern expressed about the environmental assessment in the Mott MacDonald report, which concludes that an on-road route would be more damaging to ecology and the environment than a 5km new busway across Madingley Rise and through the West Fields. Equally the lack of heritage assessment beyond Grange Road, vital for the built heritage preservation of the city, is of concern.

Request to JA: The LLF considers the conclusions of the report to be flawed, based on a poor understanding of the importance of the wider landscape to the setting of the city, and heritage implications within the city. It asks for an independent assessment of each, completed before the full EIA and HIA at Planning stage.

CAM and an off-road alternative

Resolution 2: passed unanimously

The LLF notes that the GCP only has one route that is compliant with CAM, and so asks that a northern off-road comparator be developed, for which there could be major advantages. It could better connect with the Oxford Cambridge Expressway and developments at the Girton Interchange in the longer term, but could link with the Science Park, Cambridge Biomedical Campus and the NW Cambridge site now.

ARUP report:

Request for information: The LLF would like to see the full ARUP report that looked at an alternative northern route and dismissed it. What were the terms of reference, and how were the conclusions reached?

A quick win on Madingley Road:

Resolution 3: passed by majority (2 abstentions)

Given the likely lengthy timescale involved in building any off-road C2C scheme, not least because of the new CAM compliancy brief, the LLF recommends that an in-bound bus lane be designed on Madingley Road now. This will provide significant public transport benefit to the residents west of Cambridge, and can be undertaken immediately.

Independent advisors:

Finally, the LLF would like to see a panel of independent experts assessing the economic, environmental and transport implications of the scheme, independent of the GCP.

The meeting closed 20.55.