

Cambourne to Cambridge Better Public Transport Project

Local Liaison Forum (LLF) Questions

14 November 2018

LLF members posed questions in response to papers published in advance of the GCP Joint Assembly, held on 15 November 2018. The following written responses supplement answers given in person by GCP Transport Director, Peter Blake, and Mott MacDonald's, Jo Baker, following a project presentation.

LLF Question 1

The LLF Technical Group is very disappointed with Mott MacDonald's recommendation (report dated November 2018) in favour of an off-road bus-road solution on this alignment. After having spent many hours with Mott MacDonald, we note that virtually none of our concerns have been addressed.

This scheme still does not stand up to scrutiny:

- (i) It offers poorer connectivity to, and longer onward journey times into, the City than an on-road alignment
- (ii) It offers poorer connectivity to the Cambridge Biomedical Campus and the Science Park than an on-road alignment
- (iii) It costs £154 million to construct; between £2-47* million for on-road alignment
- (iv) It has a Benefit Cost Ratio of 0.17- 0.2 - one tenth of what is required for public sector investments

Will the Transport Director please explain why a scheme with such major deficiencies is still preferred? Will he agree to work with the LLF to address our concerns, and be open to developing alternative off-road and on-road solutions?

**If tidal with gantries*

The LLF Technical Group: Gabriel Fox (Vice-Chair Coton PC), Steve Jones (Convenor of the Coalition of Parish Councils), Rod Cantrill (Ward Councillor, Newnham)

GCP Response 1

There is a growing need for action to tackle the congestion Greater Cambridge faces now and cater for future growth. The off-road route offers longer term capacity and potential for expansion to meet growing demand and development pressures. It is also the solution that aligns with the emerging CAM proposal.

Access to the city centre via Grange Road has not been shown to be less convenient than via Madingley Road and the current Universal route travels via Grange Road for city centre journeys. Access to the M11 at J13 is subject to delays due to heavy congestion on the A1303 from Madingley Mulch. Public transport services continuing on from Grange Road to the city centre will be planned based on passenger demand. Routes serving the railway station, Cambridge Biomedical Campus, Addenbrooke's Hospital and the Cambridge Science Park have been assumed, following feedback from public consultation. Work with transport operators will continue as planning progresses.

The Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) for all options remains low. The emphasis on wider economic growth is more relevant in the context of the City Deal, wider growth in Greater Cambridge and priorities of the Cambourne to Cambridge scheme. In that context, the Wider Economic Benefits (WEB) for the off-road scheme is significantly higher than the on-road alternative. An explanation of the WEB calculations is set out in the Interim Report (Appendix 1) of the GCP Assembly Report published in November 2018.

Up to 25% of the scheme costs could be met by private developers to mitigate the impact of their developments. The costs must be weighed against the benefits, which are higher for the off road option. In that context the overall assessment is based on Value for Money (a wider concept than just cost) for the public purse.

The public consultation process and ongoing stakeholder engagement is intended to inform option development, to understand and reflect concerns wherever possible in emerging proposals. The GCP will continue to work with all stakeholders to deliver a scheme that offers the greatest public benefits, in line with the project's objectives.

LLF Question 2

Why does GCP continue to push an off-road busway scheme which, at huge cost, will not deliver the people Cambourne and the proposed Bourn Airfield to where they want to go. We in the Coalition have undertaken extensive traffic surveys which tell us that only a very small proportion of people can possibly benefit.

- (i) What do you propose to do for the majority of residents of Greater Cambourne who will still need to drive to work?
- (ii) What modal split between cars and buses have you assumed in your analysis of demand to justify the cost of this busway?

Steve Jones, Convenor of the Coalition of 23 Parish Council

GCP Response 2

We would be happy to receive and respond to the research to which Mr Jones refers. The GCP has and continues to conduct research to understand and map journeys – for example, [see 2017/18 consultation responses](#).

Public transport services continuing to the city centre will be planned based on passenger demand. Routes serving the railway station, Cambridge Biomedical Campus, Addenbrooke's Hospital and the Cambridge Science Park have been assumed, following feedback from public consultation. Work with transport operators will continue as planning progresses.

LLF Question 3

Given that the Mayor and the Combined Authority, as strategic transport authority, have placed the condition on the C2C that it is CAM compliant, will the GCP now

work up fully a comparative CAM compliant option of a northern route including the Girton interchange?

Philip Allen, District Councillor Comberton and Harston Ward

GCP Response 3

Work by both the GCP and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority has identified that a route via Girton would be less direct, have high environmental impacts and would have a strong dependency on external factors around an upgrade of the Girton interchange by Highways England. The GCP has written to Highways England and had a number of meetings regarding the future of Girton Interchange. We understand that improvements to this junction are not a priority for the National Network over their next strategy period.

Analysis so far by the consultants compiling the business case for CAM has identified the off-road alignment as the most compliant route for any future CAM scheme.

Following the GCP Joint Assembly on 15 November, we have asked our consultants to revisit the previous review of the Girton interchange routing and we will provide that information in due course.

LLF Question 4

It is very clear that the route from Grange Road to Drummer Street simply does not work. Given that no evidence has been provided, how can you proceed? We previously saw documents talking about a bus interchange on Queen's Green, the Backs. How can Officers seriously claim such an interchange would not be built if this plan goes ahead?

Stephen Coates, Save West Fields

GCP Response 4

The GCP has no plans to construct an interchange on Queen's Green and no presumption regarding Drummer Street should be made. The recommended alignment brings public transport on a dedicated track to the closest possible point within central Cambridge, at Grange Road. While the segregated route would end here, public transport services continue to the city centre, via the established street network, based on passenger demand. Routes serving the railway station, Cambridge Biomedical Campus, Addenbrooke's Hospital and the Cambridge Science Park have been assumed, following feedback from public consultation. Work with transport operators will continue as planning progresses.

LLF Question 5

Grange Road is not where people want to go and it is too narrow and too congested without Cambourne buses. You must know very well that Silver St is even narrower and that modest gains in journey times will be completely lost on the way to the City Centre. Why are you avoiding clarifying this crucial problem?

Ellen Khmelnitski, Gough Way Residents' Association

GCP Response 5

The recommended alignment brings public transport on a dedicated track to the closest possible point within central Cambridge, at Grange Road. While the segregated route would end here, public transport services continue to the city centre, via the established street network, based on passenger demand. Work with transport operators will continue as planning progresses.

The GCP Executive Board will shortly consider public engagement about options for improving public transport and managing demand for road space as part of the City Access project. In our Big Conversation public engagement last year congestion on the road and the cost, reliability and access to public transport were identified as the biggest challenges people faced.

Subject to the decision of the Executive Board, the GCP will engage with those who live, work, study in or visit Cambridge to understand how potential public transport

improvements and different ways of managing demand for road space could affect them.

A number of other projects – such as the use of smart technology to provide integrated ticketing and real-time traffic information, and upgrades to the cycling network – are also being developed by the GCP to make it easier for people to travel around the city.

In providing a competitive and attractive journey, the Cambourne to Cambridge route will provide public transport priority beyond the queues which are on the key radial routes into Cambridge. This will ensure that overall journey times are competitive compared to using a car.

LLF Question 6

With reference to the Arup report (Appendix 2, page 10 JA papers), there is a cursory rejection of the alternative off-road proposal put forward by us, the LLF and others - that it is less attractive in terms of programme, planning and environmental constraints, as well as journey time. There is no information provided which decision makers can refer to in order come to a position, for example:

- Has the fact that Girton will undergo significant upgrade to become four-ways as a result of it becoming part of the Oxford-Cambridge expressway, and incorporating the CAM into this work would enable pooling of resources (e.g. Highways Agency), been considered in the assessment?
- This route would provide access to other communities (not just those from the West) who as a result would have access to the CAM and reduced journey times. Is others would benefit. Has this been considered as part of the assessment?
- There may be no requirement to cross the M11 and the length is the same or shorter than the preferred option. Has this been incorporated into the assessment?
- What environmental assessments have been undertaken to reach the conclusion in the assessment?

No information or evidence has been provided to date. Can the Assembly ask that this information is made available to both the public and the Board before they make a decision to discount this option?

James Littlewood, Cambridge CPPF

GCP Response 6

Work by both the GCP and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) has identified that a route via Girton would be less direct, have high environmental impacts and would have a strong dependency on external factors around an upgrade of the Girton interchange by Highways England. The GCP has written to Highways England and had a number of meetings regarding the future of Girton Interchange. We understand that improvements to this junction are not a priority for the National Network over their next strategy period.

The analysis done to date by the consultants developing the business case for CAM has identified the off-road alignment as the most compliant route for any future CAM scheme.

Any final route will need to undergo a full Environmental Impact Assessment which will need to demonstrate the overall impact of any scheme on the environment. Following the GCP Joint Assembly on 15 November, we have asked our consultants to revisit the previous review of the Girton interchange routing and we will provide that information in due course.

LLF Question 7

Will the Greenways Comberton to Grange Rd route be aligned/adjacent to the express bus route?

Pauline Joslin, Hardwick Parish Council

GCP Response 7

There is significant demand for safe, segregated cycle routes into the city from the west. Walking and cycling are proposed as an integral part of the recommended Cambourne to Cambridge route. In response to the consultation, further cycling and walking measures are proposed along Madingley Road as part of a separate scheme.

The proposed Comberton Greenway is subject to public consultation (closes 17 December) and final determination. Schemes will be developed to be complementary, considering consultation responses, as planning progresses.

LLF Question 8

In the 2015 consultation: almost 70% of respondents preferred an on-road bus lane in bound from Madingley Mulch roundabout into the city centre.

In the Dec 2017-Jan 2018 consultation:

- 40% of respondents preferred Option B, an On-Road tidal Public Transport lane
- 40% of respondents preferred Option A, an On-Road tidal eastbound Public Transport lane”
- = 80% preference for on-road

In Mar 2018, the Mott MacDonald report concludes: No clear preference was shown.

How can Mott MacDonald conclude this? The latest plans have been developed with no changes despite such a clear message.

What is the purpose of public consultation, and what value do GCP place on it?

Markus Gehring, Ward Councillor, Newnham

GCP Response

Full consultation results were published on the GCP website in March 2018. Results showed that 40% of respondents preferred a tidal on-road public transport lane (B),

33% of respondents preferred the off-road route (C) and 18% preferred the on-road inbound only route (A).

Route selection is driven by a wide assessment of societal, economic and environmental benefits, considering input from many stakeholders through research, consultation and feedback. The off-road route is the solution that offers longer term capacity and potential for expansion to meet growing demand and development pressures. It is also the option that best aligns with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority's plans for a Cambridgeshire Autonomous Metro.

The public consultation process and ongoing stakeholder engagement is intended to inform option development, to understand and reflect concerns wherever possible in emerging proposals. The GCP will continue to work with all stakeholders to deliver a scheme that offers the greatest public benefits, in line with the project's objectives.

LLF Question 9

- (i) Why does the preferred alignment include a hugely destructive leg from the West Cambridge Site to Grange Road, harming the West Fields, when the metro scheme would have a tunnel from the West Cambridge Site into town? Why do so much damage for something that would not be required if the metro goes ahead?
- (ii) Why do the documents claim that the Rifle Range leg would be temporary when officers have told Save the West Fields this week it would be permanent? If it is temporary why not run the buses down Madingley Road until the metro is built?
- (iii) It is clear that there is a clear legal challenge in choosing the Rifle Range leg based on harm to the purposes of the Greenbelt. Why are Assembly and Board members being asked to make a decision without proper disclosure of the legal evidence this route is workable. The claim that it increases pedestrian and cycle access does not work when you consider

that the Comberton Greenways project can deliver the same benefits without a new road?

Stephen Coates, Save the West Fields

GCP Response 9

The GCP project team continue to welcome views and contributions from stakeholders as plans for Phase 1 of the route continue to develop, in conjunction with Phase 2 consultation and planning. We are working to deliver a single route option to the GCP Board for a decision in Autumn 2019.

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) has backed the need for rapid progress and confirmed the GCP scheme as a first phase of plans for a wider, regional metro network in the future.

A Strategic Business Case for the Cambridgeshire Autonomous Metro will be presented to the CPCA Board in early 2019. As proposals are developed, the GCP will continue to collaborate with CPCA Authority to align plans and routing proposals.

The issue of Green Belt development is summarised in the National Planning Policy Framework. "Local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location" is not inappropriate in the Green Belt.

There is significant demand for safe, segregated cycle routes in to the city from the west. Walking and cycling are proposed as an integral part of the recommended Cambourne to Cambridge route. In response to the consultation, further cycling and walking measures are proposed along Madingley Road as part of a separate scheme.

The proposed Comberton Greenway is subject to public consultation (closes 17 December) and final determination. Schemes will be developed to be complementary, considering consultation responses, as planning progresses.

LLF Question 10

Of all the possible routes and alignments, GCP has chosen the one that inflicts the most harm to the residential houses, school and landscape setting of Coton Village. Why have you done this?

Mark Abbott, Coton Parish Council

GCP Response 10

Each option has been assessed using a standard national transport appraisal approach. This approach considers both transport effectiveness, engineering and implementation costs, potential environmental effects and the overall economic/public benefits. The GCP Board in October 2016 set out key criteria which route options should be considered against.

The reasons for the Specific Route Alignment (SRA) selection are set out in the report published in November 2018 and include a section by section analysis of the options. The assessment does not conclude that the SRA is the most harmful. For example, the visual impact of the pink route would be higher as seen from Coton as it is more prominent upon Madingley Hill than the blue route.

Detailed plans for environmental design measures are intended to be taken forward with input from the local community. Any final route will need to undergo a full Environmental Impact Assessment which will need to demonstrate the overall impact of any scheme on the environment.

The GCP project team continue to welcome views and contributions from stakeholders as plans for Phase 1 of the route continue to develop, in conjunction with Phase 2 consultation and planning. We are working to deliver a single route option to the GCP Board for a decision in Autumn 2019.

LLF Question 11

The Arup and officers reports refer to avoiding adverse impacts in the “West Fields” and Coton village. However the greatest impact of significance would actually be on Madingley Hill (i.e. the section between Madingley Mulch and the M11). This does not seem to be reflected in the summary assessment of Route Options, which scores

Route A as “positive” in this respect. Nor is it reflected in the proposed mitigation options – for which it appears that only the section next to the village would be mitigated.

Please can the Assembly ask why the length of route with potentially the greatest landscape impact, which is covenanted by the National Trust, does not appear to register in the constraints or mitigation?

James Littlewood, Cambridge CPPF

GCP Response 11

The National Trust covenanted land, including that owned by CPPF, was identified as a constraint at the early stage of the project development and is encompassed within the overall consideration for the recommended specific route alignment.

The treatment and approach to the environmental constraints and environmental opportunities are present within all the project assessment work to date and will continue to inform a design approach that includes the siting and positioning of infrastructure to minimise visual intrusion on the existing landscape. The design will also consider ground levels, slopes and other natural features and minimising impact on important features, such as ecological and heritage assets. The approach will continue to be informed by further assessment and refinement.

Landscape impacts upon Madingley Hill are reflected in the GCP Assembly report assessment of the route options. [Appendix 1 \(Interim Report\)](#) considers opportunities for environmental enhancement.

LLF Question 12

In Table 4 you claim that the off-road option will have no negative effect on flood risk. How can you be so sure? Is it really possible to build a road 20 m wide in a flood plain and maintain that it will not increase flood risk?

Ellen Khmelnitski, Gough way Residents' Association

GCP Response 12

Early design work has been carried out looking at the flood levels and what level of flood storage would be required to ensure no deterioration in flood risk.

Work to date confirms that this would not require a significant engineering requirement, and can be achieved with relatively moderate design and mitigation measures.

As part of the consent process undertaken, and subject to a GCP Executive Board decision in Oct 2019, a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) is required to support the planning process and to be considered in the Environmental Impact Assessment, which is scrutinised for consent by the Environment Agency and the Local Authority responsible for drainage.

LLF Question 13

Given the time it will take for plans for the CAM to be sufficiently advanced and financing found, and the recently adopted new Local Plan for South Cambridgeshire that requires high-quality public transport from Cambourne to Cambridge, quite possibly in a shorter time frame than the CAM could bring, can the GCP put in a temporary inbound bus lane on Madingley Hill as an interim measure?

Philip Allen, District Councillor Comberton and Harston Ward

GCP Response 13

The project team will explore and report back on the feasibility of 'short-term measures' within the highway boundary along Madingley Hill.

LLF Question 14

Has the GCP route given due consideration to any stray bullets from Barton Rifle Range?

Pauline Joslin, Hardwick Parish Council

GCP Response 14

Yes. The distance of the scheme from the Barton Rifle Range puts this outside the safety considerations for the project.

LLF Question 15

Why has the GCP chosen a route through the West Fields which would assist St John's and Jesus' development plans? St John's said in its Local Plan appeal:

"It is entirely appropriate that any proposed development at Grange Farm should exploit the opportunity [of the Cambourne to Cambridge busway] to connect into the corridor and better enhance its sustainable qualities. The plan is therefore illustrative but acknowledges that a route through the St John's College land at Grange Farm enables connectivity to new proposed residential development on the edge of the City"

By choosing to cross Jesus College and St John's College land this route assists their development plans. The GCP has said that it needs some developer contributions to pay for the busway - why should we not assume the GCP has decided to put "a temporary route" across the West Fields to make development easier in the future. We already have documents where some of the landowners have said development of the West Fields could part pay for the busway.

Stephen Coates, Save West Fields

GCP Response 15

The Local Plan was recently approved, and, since project inception in 2014, the Cambourne to Cambridge project has been based upon the strategy for

development contained within it, not those submitted during the appeal process by developers. Only developments contained and committed within the Local Plan are recognised within the GCP's proposals and expected to provide a contribution to the scheme, in accordance with the provisions through Section 106 planning obligations by developers.

LLF Question 16

In Table 8 you claim that the developer of the scheme will contribute £38,000,000. It's a huge sum of money. Where does it come from?

Ellen Khmelnitski, Gough way Residents' Association

GCP Response 16

The Transport Strategy for Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire (TSCSC) is focussed on how transport can support committed and planned employment and housing growth; many of the measures in the strategy are intended to help facilitate and support new development. Section 106 (S106) developer contributions are made under legal agreements between local planning authorities and developers. These are based upon the level of development and its significant impacts on the local area that fall outside what can be mitigated directly by means of conditions attached to a planning decision itself.

Section 106 (S106) developer obligations for transport are assessed by the local planning authority based upon the analysis of the Transport Assessment for any particular development. The use of planning obligations is a proven effective tool through which the local authority can seek to ensure that growth and planned development, whether individually or cumulatively, meets the objectives of, in this case high quality public transport as required in local and national policies.

The level of likely contribution will continue to be assessed and reported to the GCP Executive Board as part of the Outline Business Case in October 2019.