

What is the Eastern Access Project?

The Cambridge Eastern Access project is looking at access to and from the city from the east to enable people to get around more easily by public transport, cycle or on foot.

The Cambridge Eastern Access corridor is one of four corridors identified as essential to connect growing communities to employment hubs across the city, connecting villages to the east via Newmarket Road, providing links to Babraham Research Campus and Granta Park to the southeast, extending westward toward Cambourne via Bourn Airfield, and, linking Waterbeach to the north.

Why have you chosen Eastern Access for a public transport route?

The A1134/A1303 from Newmarket to Cambridge suffers from significant congestion at peak times, particularly at the Cambridge end, meaning that people can be sitting in traffic for lengthy periods.

Planned or potential large developments in the area, such as the possible redevelopment of the Cambridge Airport, will place considerable additional pressure on the corridor causing further congestion.

We plan to manage this with a new or improved public transport route to avoid congestion and make quicker journeys, into and out of Cambridge from the east of the county by public transport, walking and cycling.

What is the timetable for the project?

We will be engaging with the public on possible route options in the summer of 2020. This will include asking the public and stakeholder for their views. Once we have gathered feedback from the public and stakeholders we will develop more specific proposals which will go to the Executive Board in October 2020. The proposals will then go out for public consultation.

Where will the funding come from?

The project will be funded by the Greater Cambridge Partnership through the City Deal monies it receives from central government.

Who decides whether to go ahead with the route?

The decision over the final route and whether to proceed to construction will be made by the Greater Cambridge Partnership Executive Board.

A final decision may be made after a Public Inquiry by an Independent Inspector.

Is this project intended to create a new public transport scheme?

We expect the Eastern Access scheme to be delivered in two stages. The short to medium term is intended to address existing congestion through improvements to the Newmarket Road corridor.

The medium to long term would consider longer term issues such as the Cambridge Autonomous Metro and the Greater Cambridge Local Plan.

Either stage may lead to the identification of a new public transport scheme or to improvements of existing infrastructure.

What happens when the route reaches the city centre?

In and around the city centre, building on the recommendations of the Greater Cambridge Citizen's Assembly, the GCP's City Access project is developing measures to free up congested streets and step-up sustainable transport connections running through Cambridge's historic heart.

How does this project fit with the Cambridgeshire Autonomous Metro (CAM)?

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority is planning to construct the CAM as part of its Local Transport Plan. This project, along with three other GCP public transport, cycling and walking routes around the city, could also form an integral part of the Cambridgeshire Autonomous Metro (CAM).

GCP's plans are continually reviewed to ensure compliance with local strategies and have been designed to be adaptable to developing proposals.

We have seen changes to traffic patterns as a result of Covid-19. Does this mean that we won't need this project?

Covid-19 has led to significant reduction in travel in the short term and that may lead to a long term change. However this project is looking to achieve two aims:-

- To improve current provision in public transport, cycling and walking between Cambridge and Newmarket,
- To meet future need as East Cambridge grows.

The local economy in Cambridge is based around growing technology and specialist sectors such as biomedical research. So the need to improve public transport, cycling and walking to Cambridge from the East remains.

This project along with all of GCP's transport projects aims to help get Cambridge moving again and support the City's recovery from Covid-19.

What are the next steps for the Study?

After this informal engagement and parallel evidence gathering exercises we will set out some draft proposals which will be reviewed by the GCP Executive Board and, subject to their agreement, will be presented for public consultation later in the year. After we review the outcomes of the public consultation we will prepare a Strategic Outline Business Case which sets out the options for investment. Subject to the further approval of the Executive Board we would then develop and assess these options in detail as part of an Outline Business Case recommending specific proposals for investment.

Both the Cambridge Eastern Access and Waterbeach to Cambridge schemes are entering a phase of pre-consultation and early option sifting during summer 2020 and both schemes are expected to present the results of this work to the GCP Executive Board in the autumn.

How will Covid-19 Impact on progress?

GCP will continue to follow Government guidance on any necessary survey work and public consultation activities. Most aspects of the work can continue satisfactorily. The only exception is if any new traffic surveys are needed. These would need to wait until traffic levels are stable.

Has an equality assessment been done?

Cambridge Eastern Access is looking at one of the four corridors identified by the Combined Authority in the Local Transport Plan, which has been subjected to Strategic Environmental Assessment. In line with Department for Transport guidelines, an equality impact assessment and other assessments will be undertaken once there is a proposal to be assessed.