

Dear Greater Cambridge Partnership,

### **Cambridgeshire Sustainable Travel Alliance's formal response to the Making Connections consultation**

The Cambridgeshire Sustainable Travel Alliance was founded by three organisations: Cambridge Living Streets, Camcycle, and Cambridge Area Bus Users - which campaign respectively for walking, cycling, and public transport. It is these three organisations that have prepared this response.

Since its inception less than three months ago, the Alliance has been joined by over twenty organisations and our work to raise awareness of the Making Connections consultation has reached thousands of residents across the region.

Living Streets Group Cambridge	Camcycle	Cambridge Area Bus Users
Campaign for Better Transport	Cycling UK	Transport Action Network
Rail Future	Sustrans	Milton Cycling Campaign
Ely Cycling campaign	Cambridge Parents for the Sustainable Travel Zone	Hunts Walking & Cycling Group
CTC Cambridge	Cam Vale Bus User Group	Meldreth, Shepreth and Foxtton Rail User Group
A10 Corridor Cycling Campaign	Cambridge Carbon Footprint	Carbon Neutral Cambridge
Zedify	Asthma+Lung UK	East Cambs Climate Action Network
Voi.	St Ives Eco Action	Cambridge Electric Transport
Outspoken Training	Electric Bike Sales	Cambridge Green Peace
Cyclecentric Ltd	Outspoken Cycles	

Our mission is to unite and inspire people in Cambridgeshire to work for a transport network that protects our future and offers genuine choice. We support the principle of a Sustainable Travel Zone (STZ) for Cambridge and believe the funding and opportunity presented by the Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) offers a unique moment to reshape the city and wider county around the needs of its people.

Below we provide our response to the Making Connections consultation by responding to the three key sections:

1. Bus improvements
2. Walking, cycling & public space
3. A sustainable travel zone

## **Bus Improvements**

These plans are vital in persuading people to switch travel modes and 'trust the bus'. In this time of increasing economic hardship for so many families, providing cheap, frequent, reliable buses can cut travel costs. The longer operating hours and enhanced rural service would also allow communities to rely on the bus as their means of transport.

We believe the bus improvements should be delivered through bus franchising and this should be in place prior to the full implementation of the sustainable travel zone road charge. Franchising would give the transport authority control over routes, times and frequency of operation, and permit cross-subsidy from profitable routes to help support routes that are not financially self-sustaining.

Greater Cambridge Partnership should provide Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority's Adult Education Budget with ring-fenced funding for a bus driver recruitment and training programme, akin to the West Yorkshire Combined Authority's 'Route to Success' programme, which involves myth-busting days, to attract people currently working in retail and hospitality, and a fully-funded theory course, featuring flexible hours, leading to earning a Passenger Carrying Vehicle Licence.

The services need to offer a mix of increased frequencies on existing routes, new express routes and reliable, guaranteed, demand-responsive links. Increased service frequencies will put a significant strain on the limited city centre bus infrastructure and road-space. To minimise this pressure, and reduce the need to change buses, through routes that avoid terminating in the city centre should be promoted wherever possible, such as re-linking routes 7 and 8. Other direct routes to key destinations (eg Addenbrooke's/Biomedical Campus) avoiding the city centre should be introduced to reduce congestion in the city centre.

Additional improvements should also include:

- Information about key fares and payment methods must be provided at all stops.
- Current and accurate route, timetable and real-time information should be displayed at all stops.
- A high-quality route planner should be used, such as Citimapper.
- All bus stops should be linked to a well-maintained, well-lit pedestrian footway, safely accessible by passengers with limited mobility.
- All bus stops should be a comfortable, safe and secure place to sit and wait for a bus.
- Dial-a-ride services should be extended across Cambridgeshire and fares reduced in line with buses to help people with reduced mobility.
- Traffic signals should prioritise pedestrians, cyclists and buses.

## **Walking, cycling and public space**

The proposals will result in thousands of additional journeys every day on the pavements and cycle routes in and around the city. Urgent action is required across the city to make these journeys safe, as well as longer-term strategies to ensure the number of people walking and cycling continues to increase.

Many of the existing walking and cycling routes across Cambridgeshire are in a poor condition or already at capacity. As proposed, the business case delays funding for walking and cycling

during the initial years of operation and this is not acceptable. We believe that 20% of the charging revenue should be ring-fenced specifically for walking and cycling improvements along with a package of walking and cycling quick wins that should be funded prior to the full implementation of the STZ.

Road space must also be reclaimed when the STZ is implemented. This will support the rollout of quiet streets, school streets, and low-traffic neighbourhoods which must continue quickly in line with the emerging Cambridgeshire Road Hierarchy. Reclaiming road space will also provide a once-in-a-generation opportunity to redesign and re-prioritise the junctions across Cambridge to support greater levels of walking and cycling. A list of priority junction improvements should be scoped, designed, and be ready to implement. A similar exercise is required for the bridges across the city, many of which will need to be improved to facilitate increased levels of walking and cycling.

We are not convinced that the GCP fully realises the high return for investment that active travel can deliver, especially if fully funded. Active travel is highly flexible, non-polluting, and has a low impact on travel infrastructure. We would welcome a shift in the GCP's approach that indicates recognition of the advantages of active travel. Cambridge should aspire to become the most pedestrian and cycle-friendly city in the world.

## **A Sustainable Travel Zone**

We broadly welcome the introduction of a Sustainable Travel Zone, including a road charge. Reducing the use of cars and reallocating space and priority to walking, cycling, and buses helps to solve urban and environmental issues. It also creates safe, healthy and attractive places for people to live, work, and visit.

Car journeys impose external costs on society, amounting to a public subsidy. Particulate and other emissions impact on public health (with poor air quality amplified in cities) whilst traffic congestion negatively impacts on bus travel.

The ever-present risk of road traffic accidents, together with the disproportionate allocation of road space, discourages walking and cycling. A road charge can redress this imbalance and help fund walking, cycling and public transport. These modes generate societal benefits of reduced congestion, improved air quality, and increased mobility for people of all ages and abilities, especially those too young or unable to drive a car.

We think that £5 is a fair charge that adequately reflects the social impacts of driving and helps to change travel behaviours.

We are broadly happy with the proposed zone and its boundary because it works effectively with the existing park and rides. The level of congestion at the weekend is still high and this will only increase as many people will shift certain trips. We would therefore like to see a more flexible approach considered to ensure Cambridge does not become gridlocked at the weekend.

We also believe that it would be appropriate to give short-term and medium-term exemptions that could be assigned to those with temporary health or social care needs and who are assessed as currently unfit to travel on public transport.

The Making Connections proposals will offer many people multiple options to complete a journey. However, a number of existing residents who travel out of the city by car for either work

or leisure will be left with little choice but to pay the charge if their destination is not served well by public transport. Additional options should be explored which could reduce the impact of the proposals on these residents.

Time and again during our work to promote the Making Connections proposals, people we have talked to have expressed a lack of trust in both the GCP and in organisations such as Stagecoach. Therefore, the intention of the GCP to ramp up the bus network prior to the full implementation of the STZ is absolutely necessary. However, we feel a further commitment is required to assure people that no road charging shall be implemented until key walking and cycling improvements have been completed and the bus network is operating as promised. Therefore, we suggest a number of key performance indicators are established and that a minimum requirement is identified and met prior to the implementation of the STZ.

### **A more equitable future for Cambridge**

Without policy intervention, the number of daily journeys in the region is projected to increase by around 20% by 2031. This has implications for health, air quality, emissions, and congestion. The combined authority and its constituent councils signed up to the recommendations outlined in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Independent Commission on Climate's report, which included a commitment to reduce car mileage by 15%, using a 2019 baseline across the region. To put the scale of this target into perspective, we have calculated this as equal to 732 million miles of car mileage.

One of the greatest challenges facing Cambridgeshire is how to achieve such a reduction in vehicle miles whilst improving transport equity, improving productivity and reducing isolation. The Making Connections proposals focus on a reduction of vehicle trips in the most densely-populated area of the county and investment in public transport which will benefit people across a much wider geography. The issues our region faces are too big to allow us to continue with the status quo. Decision-makers who reject the principle of road charging must propose other feasible measures which could ensure Cambridgeshire meets its travel reduction and climate change commitments.

Progressing with the Making Connections proposal will require people to change. For some, it will bring additional costs, and for others a certain amount of inconvenience. However, if the proposals are developed in the right way and supported by clear communications, the scheme should give everyone the opportunity to rely on sustainable transport alternatives, improve journey times as a whole and reduce their existing transport costs. At a city level, a Sustainable Travel Zone would reduce air pollution, increase liveability, improve public space, and reduce congestion. Across the region, it will improve connectivity, reduce social isolation and provide funding opportunities for future infrastructure that supports walking, cycling and public transport. At a national level, it will establish Cambridgeshire as a region that sets the agenda and one that is willing to take bold action to meet its climate commitments. In short, we believe the proposals will help to create a thriving region of opportunity and inclusion, where people can travel safely, easily and affordably.

We hope that the GCP will work closely with stakeholders and the community to develop these proposals further and we urge them to maintain a constant dialogue on progress. The community already holds many of the best ideas for improving walking, cycling, and public transport around the region and the GCP must listen to these voices to ensure the best outcomes.