

County Councillor Report for Parishes – June 2023 – Cllr Anna Bradnam

Highways and Transport

My report this month concentrates (mainly) on Highways and Transport issues, as there are so many live issues at the moment.

Cambridge and Peterborough Combined Authority – Electric Buses

On 12 May Cambridgeshire received 30 brand new electric buses, which will replace some of our older buses and will be used on our P&R sites from 15 May. Putting in a bid for this small fleet of electric buses- and winning it - was one of the first things Mayor Nik Johnson did and has taken time for Volvo to build them for us. You may have noticed these zero emission buses out and about in Cambridge.

Greater Cambridge Partnership – Making Connections

Following the public consultation, the Greater Cambridge Partnership published the report of their findings on 26 May. [MC22-consultation-report \(greatercambridge.org.uk\)](https://www.greatercambridge.org.uk/MC22-consultation-report)

Findings from GCP's Making Connections consultation published (greatercambridge.org.uk)

“The key findings and the wide-ranging views – both in favour and against the proposals – are contained in a paper to the GCP’s Joint Assembly, which meets on 8 June. After this there will be a further paper to the Executive Board on 29 June, when a recommendation will be formulated, which will be put to the County Council in July. The headlines are:

- Over 70% of people were **in favour** of the future transport network – with more buses to more locations, cheaper fares and longer operating times supported by better walking and cycling infrastructure to give people faster, cheaper and more reliable travel alternatives to the car.
- 58% of respondents **opposed** the proposed Sustainable Travel Zone (STZ) as the means for delivering the transport vision. Opposition increased with age from 35 to 64 with 55–64-year-olds the most likely to oppose. Those who lived outside of Cambridge were also more likely to oppose.
- 34% of people **support** the STZ as proposed. Support was highest among the youngest and the oldest respondents, who are more likely to find it most difficult to access education and healthcare due to the limitations of the existing bus network. Support was highest in the city centre and west of the city.
- Around half of those who **oppose** the STZ did support the vision for better buses.
- The views from organisations such as business, healthcare and others were broadly supportive of the plans but with caveats about the impact on staff or those who were vulnerable.
- Additional representative opinion polling was carried out which showed opposition and support for a road user charge was more balanced.

The reasons for supporting or opposing varied but covered a variety of areas:

- Those who supported the proposals were keen to get more frequent bus services, would be able to cycle more safely and generally were positive towards the idea of a charge to tackle climate change and reduce congestion.
- While those who opposed felt the exemptions didn't go far enough, and perceived a charge to be unfair, in particular on those travelling to Addenbrooke's and Papworth hospitals, and also believed there would be a negative impact on jobs."

A direct question in the poll asked what measures would make the STZ more acceptable. "Aside from those who said that no measure would persuade them to support the STZ, the most commonly mentioned amendment was the rate paid by cars, followed by alteration of the STZ boundary, and then changes to discounts, exemptions and reimbursement for the charge."

GCP – Milton Road – bus priority and active travel improvements

[Milton Road \(greatercambridge.org.uk\)](http://greatercambridge.org.uk)

Multiple teams have been working on sections of Milton Road between Mitcham's Corner and Kings Hedges Road. New kerbs and bus stop have been installed along the east side of Milton Rd and the Elizabeth Way roundabout is being enlarged to make it safer for cyclists.

GCP – Waterbeach to Cambridge Busway [Waterbeach to Cambridge \(greatercambridge.org.uk\)](http://greatercambridge.org.uk)

The public consultation ended in March, comparing a western route (west of Landbeach) with a revised central route (through Landbeach). We await next proposals.

GCP Waterbeach Greenway (Cycle) [Waterbeach Greenway \(greatercambridge.org.uk\)](http://greatercambridge.org.uk)

The route proposed and consulted upon in 2021, beside the railway, is looking as if it will not be practical as in addition to the difficulty of access land next to the railway, the land is in the flood zone. It seems likely that another route may be explored, which will require further consultation, probably in October 2023.

GCP Horningsea Greenway (Cycle) [Horningsea Greenway \(greatercambridge.org.uk\)](http://greatercambridge.org.uk)

Following the presentation to the Executive Board Meeting in March 2023, early construction works have started, so that is consultation with landowners, as well as applications for planning, permits and legal orders.

Urban&Civic – Mereway and Landbeach 'Public Realm'

I happened to meet contractors on site in April. Early works were due to start in May at the southern end of the Mereway. When they do start, they plan to have four teams working on different sections simultaneously, so the work will progress quickly. I am concerned that there is a proposal to put parking spaces, next to the church, on the Church bends. I find it hard to believe this will not make these bends even more dangerous than they are now.

Cam & Pet Combined Authority Transport and Connectivity Plan

Ideally strategies for transport in the CPCA, the GCP and County need to be aligned to be most effective. The papers going to their meeting on 31 May include this Appendix 4 relating to Greater Cambridgeshire [Document.ashx \(cmis.uk.com\)](http://cmis.uk.com/Document.ashx)

East West Rail – following the public consultation in 2021 and public engagement since, on 26 May, East West Rail **confirmed that the southern route remained their preferred route.**

[Route-update-report.pdf \(eastwestrail-production.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com\)](http://eastwestrail-production.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/Route-update-report.pdf)

“At the last consultation, we expressed our preference for a southern approach into Cambridge, serving the Cambridge Biomedical Campus via the new station at Cambridge South. We’ve looked again at this approach and compared it with a northern approach and one that serves Cambridge North station. We’ve been able to make meaningful improvements to the northern option which we previously considered, particularly in terms of reducing the need for two additional tracks on the existing railway, which would significantly reduce its cost. We’ve also been able to make material improvements to the impact of the southern approach, by reducing the need for and height of embankments and viaducts through South Cambridgeshire. We’ve concluded that, despite the northern approach potentially being a cheaper option than the south, it doesn’t deliver the same economic benefits.”

In slightly more detail they said,

“In addition, there are three times as many jobs within walking distance of Cambridge South station compared to Cambridge North. The existing transport network is also more congested in the south, making it harder for existing employees to get to work, and limiting further job creation.

We considered whether it would be possible to serve Cambridge South station taking the northern approach but concluded that this would reduce the frequency of trains and extend journey times, including likely requiring passengers to change trains, to an unacceptable level. It ... wouldn’t deliver the economic opportunity that underpins the case for EWR.

Having reviewed all the consultation feedback ... our conclusion remains that approaching Cambridge from the south is the best solution for the city, the region and – given the global opportunity at the Biomedical Campus – for the whole of the UK too. Approaching Cambridge from the south also means that EWR does not take up the existing capacity on the rail network north of the city, leaving this option available for others in the future.”

The detail is in section 7 pages 104 – 114. I am relieved that Milton will not be separated from Landbeach and Waterbeach by a railway line.

Cambridgeshire Priorities Capital Fund (CPCF)

Funding is being made available to improve community buildings across Cambridgeshire to bolster local services. Communities can apply for a grant of up to £40,000 for projects which will improve community cohesion, especially caring for the elderly in the community.

Applications can relate to capital funding projects which includes buildings, indoor and outdoor equipment and installation services. Those applying will have to show how their projects will support the council to achieve its vision of becoming a greener, fairer and more caring Cambridgeshire through the delivery of **at least three** of its ambitions. These are:

- Net zero carbon emissions for Cambridgeshire by 2045
- Travel across the county is safer and more environmentally sustainable
- Health inequalities are reduced
- People enjoy healthy, safe, and independent lives through timely support that is most suited to their needs
- People are helped out of poverty and income inequality
- Places and communities prosper because they have a resilient and inclusive economy, access to good quality public services and social justice is prioritised
- Children and young people have opportunities to thrive.

Applications which will support the council to achieve the aims and ambitions of its Care Together programme – to keep people remaining independently at home for as long as possible - are particularly welcome.

The fund will open later this year with successful bids expected to be chosen early in 2024.

anna.bradnam@cambridgeshire.gov.uk 01223 862364
29/05/2023