

Cambridge City Council

Record of Executive Decision

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Bus Strategy Consultation Response

Decision of: Councillor Katie Thornburrow, Executive Councillor for Planning Policy and Infrastructure

Reference: 2323/URGENCY/P&T/03

Date of decision: 14/02/23

Date Published on website: 24/02/23

Decision Type: Non-Key

Matter for Decision: To agree the response to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Bus Strategy Consultation

Why the decision had to be made (and any alternative options): The Combined Authority is consulting on a draft Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Bus Strategy between 12th January and 23rd February 2023.

The Strategy is a short, high-level document, setting out the main principles of how the Combined Authority will achieve its ambition and more than double bus patronage by 2030.

More details of how the Combined Authority will deliver and fund this are set out in its Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), published in 2021 in response to the publication of the National Bus Strategy: Bus Back Better. The Strategy and BSIP will be regularly reviewed to reflect changing circumstances and to push continuous improvement.

The Strategy is a supporting document to the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP), reflecting the ambition to reduce traffic and emissions and provide a much more sustainable transport network that benefits everyone. The Councils responded to the draft LTCP consultation in 2022. The LTCP will be developed further in the light of consultation responses and adopted in 2023.

The Strategy includes the following vision: “The vision is for a comprehensive network of bus services across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough that people find convenient, easy to use, reliable and good value for money, that is inclusive and offers a viable alternative to the car.”

The vision is supported by a number of goals, outcomes and attributes, following which, the Strategy sets out four main principles underpinning the approach to delivering the bus service improvements in this Strategy:

1. Achieving a continuous cycle of passenger growth and service improvement
2. Using the best operational model of provision to achieve the necessary step change in the most effective way
3. Partnership
4. Integration

Finally, the Bus Strategy addresses the following topic issues relevant to delivering the Strategy’s vision:

- An integrated, coherent network linking people to the places they want to get to
- Bus services for rural areas
- Getting to places quickly and on time
- Value for money and simple, integrated ticketing
- Delighting customers

The consultation details and the draft Strategy is hosted on [the Combined Authority’s website](#).

Officers have drafted a proposed brief response to the consultation reflecting the high level nature of the Strategy.

Response to the consultation

It is proposed that the response is joint with South Cambridgeshire District Council, which will separately be considering the response.

The proposed response can be found in Appendix 1 of this report.

The proposed consultation response expresses strong support for the content of the Bus Strategy, and also highlights the importance of translating these aims into delivery, noting a limited number of specific points.

Alternative options

The alternative options available are:

1. Agree to submit the response in Appendix A, with possible minor amendments
2. Agree an alternative response.

Executive Councillor's decision: To submit the response in Appendix A to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Bus Strategy consultation.

Reasons for the decision: The proposed response addresses issues raised by the consultation.

Scrutiny consideration: The Chair and Spokespersons of Planning & Transport Scrutiny Committee were consulted prior to the action being authorised.

Report: Appendix 1 – Draft Response to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Bus Strategy Consultation

Conflict of interest: None

Comments: Councillor S Davies note the reference to increasing the size of the bus fleet, if possible, would also like to record the need for evolution of the interior space available within buses, with greater capacity for bulky pushchairs, mobility aids etc - users of these will increasingly come into conflict with each other if the floorplan of buses remains unchanged.

As part of the consultation response the additional text was included 'As part of this it is important to consider the evolution of the interior space of the buses to provide greater capacity for pushchairs, mobility aids etc.'

No further comments were made.

Appendix A: Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority draft Bus Strategy consultation 2023 – response by Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council

Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council strongly support the vision, aims, outcomes and attributes included in the draft Bus Strategy, and the ambition to more than double bus patronage by 2030.

On a particular point, we strongly welcome the aim of delighting customers to transform image of bus travel, and note the importance of ongoing bus maintenance to support this. Furthermore, it is important that the use of buses be championed with support provided to encourage those not used to using the bus to do so, including those who may not be confident about that, e.g., some older people. As part of this it is important to consider the evolution of the interior space of the buses to provide greater capacity for pushchairs, mobility aids etc.

We also particularly support Principle 4 ‘Integration’ on page 12 which recognises the need for greater integration of bus services in areas like Greater Cambridge especially between bus and train & P&R and rural services (both in terms of services and ticketing), and the principle of on demand/demand responsive services in lower-density areas which should be further evaluated (e.g. the potential expansion of the ‘TING’ service launched in rural West Huntingdonshire to other communities across Cambridgeshire). There are also ‘dial-a-ride’ services within Cambridge which could be extended within and beyond Cambridge and be made more efficient through economies of scale. Rural travel hubs such as Whittlesford are also key to this connectivity. Furthermore, where dedicated staff buses are provided by the various campuses eg Granta and Wellcome, consideration should be given as to how best to integrate these services with other rural services for the benefit of employees and local people. Also, the GCP plans for hourly bus services in villages where they do not exist will be key benefits for our communities and the bus strategy should be mindful of this.

We would like to highlight the importance of translating these aims into delivery, including but not limited to the following points:

- As highlighted in the Greater Cambridge Partnership Making Connections consultation, the bus fleet will need to increase very substantively to support the vision and aims.
- As highlighted in our response to the draft Local Transport and Connectivity Plan in 2022:
 - we note the importance of significantly increasing bus depot provision in the Greater Cambridge area to support the proposed increases in bus services. The location of new depots and their potential impacts will require thorough consideration, which will require early engagement with the Local Planning Authorities.
 - We also strongly suggest that to support the shift towards electric vehicles, the Combined Authority commits to working with government and relevant partners to accelerate delivery of new grid capacity to underpin decarbonisation of both private and public transport across the area.

We would recommend that exploration of bus franchising should draw on any lessons learned from others' transport franchising experiences, such as the UK government's rail franchising activities in recent decades.