UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
Estates Division

Graham Matthews BSc MBA FRICS
Director of Estates

Rachel Stoppard
Greater Cambridge Partnership

e-mail: consultations@greatercambridge.org.uk

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Dear Rachel

Making Connections: Response from the University of Cambridge

The University welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) consultation, Making Connections, which sets out proposals for transforming public transport, cycling and walking opportunities as well as reducing pollution and congestion.

We understand that the purpose of the consultation is to seek opinion on three key areas:

- A new bus network, offering more frequent services, with longer operating hours, more rural connections, and new routes into our growing employment sites.
- Creating space for improvements to walking, cycling and our public spaces.
- Options for raising money to pay for improvements to the transport network.

The principles outlined within the Making Connections consultation align with the University's own Transport Strategy ambitions for affordable and connected transport, and other policy areas for decarbonisation, environmental sustainability as well as quality of life for staff, students and the wider Cambridge society.

A fair and just society is fundamental to delivering sustainable growth in our region and we see that these proposals will go some way to supporting these ambitions.

The impact of an ineffective and insufficient transport system is evident in Cambridge and the University are supportive of a transformative, robust and adaptive transport system that:

- Reduces the impact from travel, as more people live in and travel to our area for work.
- Increases affordable choices for people on how they access services and facilities.
- Improves air quality, public health and reduces the impact on the climate and our environment.

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Greenwich House
Madingley Road
Cambridge
CB3 0TX

Tel: 01223 337806
Email: Graham.Matthews@admin.cam.ac.uk
www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/em

- Creates a city environment that encourages active travel and provides safe and attractive places for people.

- Provides an inclusive, accessible and connected city and its hinterland.

As you are aware, the University is a major employer in the Cambridge Region and around 50% of our staff commuting to the city from outlying areas. This has resulted in door to door journey time that, for many, are in excess of 1.5 hours due to congestion, poor connectivity/services on public transport and/or inadequate links to suitable active travel routes.

We also recognise that during the last 18 months, travel habits and patterns for many have changed, even within the University and we are still understanding the changes that working from home and working in a more agile way will have on our estate and operations. However, it is clear that even with these changes that demand for travel has not waned. The road network continues to be under significant pressure, our public transport is struggling to provide realistic solutions and we have limited space for people to travel more actively and to enjoy our beautiful city.

We also know that we are seeing a car-based recovery with significantly higher levels a vehicular traffic in some areas of the region, and this does nothing to address the challenges of equality, inclusion or accessibility and so a just transition to a more suitable future is paramount for any proposals that are implemented.

For change to happen the University recognises that the way people travel is dependent on realistic opportunities for walking, cycling and public transport, and improvements to the use of technology. The proposed solutions need to be far reaching and avoid simply sifting the issues to the periphery of the city and/or to more localised hotspots in the outlying towns and villages.

This can only be achieved if bold action is taken in the short, medium and long term and we would welcome greater impetus to deliver the changes required.

Delivering Improvements: The University is supportive in principle of measures to enhance the cityscape, local communities and to ensure that traffic is managed more effectively and efficiently. More detailed information is required, however, to assess the operational impact on our sites and on key services including security, maintenance, and the emergency services.

The following sets out the University's response to the three key areas discussed within the consultation.

1. Investing in Public Transport

a. Improved Public Transport: We need a connected transport system that is Inclusive, accessible, and technologically future-proofed by design. A connected transport system is not just about linking people and place but also about creating a connected sustainable transport system, fully integrated to include infrastructure design, services, passenger information and payments.

There needs to be an integrated and collaborative approach to delivery of a net zero and connected transport system that accounts for factors that inform why people travel by different modes, such as reliability, cost, and frequency. Recognising the frequency and cost points that will encourage mass uptake of public transport could be transformative.

b. Integrated and connected transport systems: Local and regional partners will need to work collaboratively to ensure that identified projects complement existing and proposed projects. This will be critical for achieving an integrated transport system that connect Cambridge's key employment & research sites, including West Cambridge, the Science Park as well as the Cambridge Biomedical Campus, Granta Park and Babraham Research Campus to the South.

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The University would wish to ensure that public improvements to rail infrastructure across the region will connect into the GCP's proposed mass transit solutions, enabling multi-modal transport integration.

It is also imperative that a solution to provide a truly connected transport system is identified for the central area of Cambridge, thus ensuring services do not just stop on the edge of the city's core.

c. **Reliable and affordable public transport:** The University welcomes further investment to increase service provision, reliability and journey times in public transport which connect homes to jobs and other everyday services and facilities. To support these improvements the University would welcome a strategic approach to public transport, including route planning, interchange and technological solutions for ticketing, information, and journey planning.

From our own experience, ticketing and poor quality information are barriers to using public transport. The University would welcome a collaborative approach to ticketing across operators and modes of travel, with one ticket and one payment from origin to destination. In addition, information regarding journey and travel options can be confusing and the University would welcome a collaborative approach to information provision.

2. Investing in Active Travel and Micro-Mobility

a. **Improved cycling and walking:** The University would welcome improvements to walking and cycling networks that connect residential, business, leisure, and transport hubs/interchanges across the city and with surrounding towns and villages.

Our City needs transforming to provide a clean and healthy environment for all people to enjoy and move seamlessly and safely.

b. **Connected places:** To support this, we would hope that the plans include improved infrastructure such as people only spaces, better connected spaces with safe crossings points as well as cycle parking and associated facilities at key destinations including the city centre, park and ride sites and other public transport interchanges.

c. **Reallocation of Space:** Indeed, the University recognises the work and many of the recommendations in the Running out of Road report produced for the National Infrastructure Commission in 2018, which suggested that cycling should be considered a form of mass transit for Cambridge. The University would like to see the Cambridge develop its own Mass Transit Cycle network, giving cyclists protection from vehicles on routes outside of the city with priority being transferred to cyclists on the highway within the city, through the reallocation of road space.

We recognise that the facilities identified within previous consultations including the Greenway consultations will go some way to achieving this, however, we would welcome a more ambitious network of cycling and walking infrastructure with greater priority and road space given to pedestrians and cyclist from the urban area of Cambridge to the edge of the central pedestrianised core, thus enabling an effective mass transit solution for Cambridge.

3. Demand Management and Income Generation

a. **Managing Traffic:** The use of technology is welcomed to support free flowing traffic and improvements in air quality. We are, however, concerned about the impact that current traffic control points have in funnelling traffic from the west and the south into central Cambridge. Resulting in significant impacts along Silver Street, Trumpington Street, Pembroke Street, Downing Street and Tennis Court Road, which has a harmful effect on a

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number of University and College sites in central Cambridge relative to severance, air pollution and conflict between people and vehicles. This area has the potential to create a quality urban realm to support the promotion of cultural facilities including a number of University museums.

We would, therefore, welcome a review of the current arrangements and identify how traffic levels in these locations can be reduced substantially.

Whilst on-street parking has a role within the City, we support the removal of spaces in areas where other transport opportunities exist and where there is greatest risk to pedestrians, air quality and the city's heritage.

However, as discussed in further detail, any measures that restrict the use of private vehicles must be commensurately mitigated by improvements to public services and sustainable means of travel. This is essential for University students and staff as well as local residents.

b. Revenue Generation: The University accepts that a revenue stream is needed to support the wider city objectives of enabling growth and reducing traffic; however, we do not accept that the Workplace Parking Levy (WPL) is the best solution to achieve that and therefore, as stated in our previous responses (which can be viewed here), do not support the introduction of the WPL.

The University believes that Cambridge is a fast-growing innovative city that requires a flexible intelligent solution to revenue generation, combining restrictions and charges to those who cause the most impact on air quality, quality of place and the functionality of our City.

As outlined, the University would not, however, advocate the implementation of charges prior to significant improvements to public transport, cycling and walking routes and facilities across the City including measures that support those who require connections to and from Cambridge's rural hinterland and beyond. Any solutions that do not provide these prospects will be seen as penalising those who cannot afford to live in Cambridge.

The investment in Cambridge's transport infrastructure is welcomed and will support existing and future investment by the University and others. It will help to ensure that Cambridge remains a growing, evolving and sustainable centre of excellence and a world leader in the fields of higher education and research. It will help the city to nurture its industries and will facilitate a further expansion of its knowledge-based economy, while retaining the high quality of life and place that underpins our city and supports its standout economic success. It will help spread access to Cambridge's many opportunities to communities across its hinterlands and is essential for the University and the local authorities to deliver on their proposed commitments in the years and decades ahead.

We fully support and remain committed to the overriding ambitions of the GCP and other city partners to provide a connected, inclusive, and affordable transport system that is fitting for our City and our communities. This task is more important than ever if we are to sustain Cambridge's pace of growth and ambitions for sustainability.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss any of the points raised in this response, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Graham Matthews