

**Greater Cambridge Partnership  
SH1311  
Shire Hall  
Castle Hill  
Cambridge  
CB3 0AP**

29 March 2019

Dear Sirs

**Choices for Better Journeys: response from the University of Cambridge**

The University welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) consultation, Choices for Better Journeys. We understand that the purpose of the consultation is to seek opinion on the future improvements to public transport, cycling and walking and to identify a funding solution that can support the following either through deterrent or investment:

- Reducing congestion, specifically peak time congestion.
- Improving air quality and sense of place.
- Providing a fast, reliable public transport cycling and walking (Mass Transit) solutions.

The University welcomes the focus on this area and the GCP's ambitions, however would welcome greater impetus to deliver the changes required.

As you will be aware, the University is a major employer in the Cambridge region and around 50% of our 12,300 staff commute to the city from outlying areas. This has resulted in door to door journey times that, for many, are in excess of 1.5 hours due to congestion on the highway, poor connectivity/services on public transport and/or inadequate links to suitable cycling and walking routes.

Peak-time congestion and poor connectivity therefore has an impact on the productivity, health and well-being of our staff and the environmental quality of our operational sites.

The University recognises that changes to the way people travel are dependent upon the provision of realistic opportunities for walking, cycling and public transport, and improvements to the use of technology. Transport networks surrounding Cambridge are often at capacity during peak times so solutions will need to be far reaching and avoid simply shifting the issues to the periphery of the city and/or to more localised hotspots in the outlying towns and villages.

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This can only be achieved if bold and strategic action is taken for the short, medium and long term benefit of the city and its communities. We believe there are choices in this consultation which make this eminently possible.

The following paragraphs set out the University's response to the rationales identified within the consultation:

- **Building door-to-door connectivity:** It is critical to the University and many other employers that our staff have the opportunity to live within reasonable door-to-door travel times. Therefore any improvements should aim to enhance homes-jobs connectivity across the Cambridgeshire area. This will widen the net of affordable homes for the Cambridge Labour market and reflect a central tenet of Cambridge's 2014 Devolution Deal.

This is particularly relevant to key workers and other low paid staff across Cambridgeshire, as well as University staff based in areas of the city that require multiple changes to public transport provision, such as the Cambridge Biomedical Campus (CBC) and West Cambridge (especially if access by private car is to be further restricted).

- **Integrating existing transport systems:** The GCP will need to work carefully with local and regional partners to ensure that identified projects complement existing and proposed projects that already include Cambridge South Station, the CAM Metro and associated public transport improvements along the key corridors. This will be critical for achieving integrated transport access to Cambridge's key employment & research sites, including West Cambridge, The Science Park to the North as well as Granta Park and Babraham Research Campus to the South East.
- **Better public transport:** The University welcomes further investment to improve reliability and journey times in public transport services which connect homes to jobs. 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.

The University is committed to improving bus services and continues to invest in the Universal bus service which has seen year on year growth and now transports over half a million people a year.

The University would also be keen to ensure that public improvements to rail infrastructure will connect into the GCP's proposed mass transit solutions; enabling multi-modal transport integration.

- **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.

To support this, we hope that the plans include improved infrastructure such as pedestrian crossings, cycle parking and associated facilities at key destinations including the city centre, park and ride sites and other public transport interchanges.

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 London style 'Cycle Superhighway' network, giving cyclists protection from vehicles on routes outside of the city with priority being transferred to cyclists on the highway within the city.

As well as connecting communities with employment, education and other facilities, cycle superhighways have the opportunity to provide mass transit solutions that:

- Are low on emissions.
- Are safe and reliable.
- Enable healthy forms of transport.
- Complement public transport solutions.

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 cyclists from the urban area of Cambridge to the edge of the central core, thus enabling an effective mass transit solution for Cambridge.

The following paragraphs outline Cambridge University's response to the specific measures proposed within the consultation:

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

- **On-street parking controls:** 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 below, 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.

- **Revenue Generation:** The University accepts that a revenue stream is needed to support the wider GCP 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 response to the 8 point plan in 2016, do not support the introduction of the WPL for the following reasons:
  - WPL is a revenue generating tool rather than a travel demand management tool. It is unlikely to result in modal shift or reduced congestion (as demonstrated in Nottingham). In addition, when the possible income generation from WPL is compared to other income generation tools it would require each space to be in excess of £1500. This is likely to put a significant burden on individual organisations, including many charities and NHS facilities, with little net benefit for air quality, congestion or benefit to public transport provision. In the view of Cambridge University, revenue generation schemes must have a direct and substantial impact on these issues if they are to provide a sustainable solution to the city's transport problems.

- The cost impact would not be equitable, targeting only on major employers and excluding a range of other significant peak-time trip generators including parents on the school-run, retail customer car parks, publicly accessible car parks, small employers and (unless removed entirely) on-street car parking. There would therefore be a disproportionate cost burden on major employers. We estimate that the cost to the University could be in excess of £5M p.a., a significant amount.
- The University's existing investment in travel planning measures might need to be diverted in order to meet the WPL costs.
- Alternatively, if the full costs were passed on to staff, a perverse incentive could be created for people to exploit public car parking resources, further worsening inner city congestion.

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 operations of our City.

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

- **Smart transport technology:** The University supports the use of smart technology solutions. There are a number of technology-based transport solutions and the University would welcome consideration by the GCP in providing the following:
  - Intuitive journey planning which guides individuals to the best travel option (origin to destination) based on weather, diary, congestion, time of day, etc.
  - One ticket one payment to include multimodal bundles across all modes inclusive of parking.
  - Flexible intelligent charging mechanism which directs traffic to appropriate locations and generates a sustainable income stream.
- **Public space and air quality:** The University supports the GCP's ambition to make improvements to public space and welcomes the recently published Air Quality Feasibility study which highlights that immediate action is required if we are to protect our communities. The report highlights significant poor air quality in our City Centre and the CBC which require significant changes if we are to create a quality place for people to live, work and play.

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 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 growing 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.

Yours faithfully



Jason Matthews