

## Feedback from the Extraordinary Joint Meeting of the Executive Board and Joint Assembly 26<sup>th</sup> June 2023

Report to: Greater Cambridge Partnership Executive Board

Date: 29<sup>th</sup> June 2023

Lead: Councillor Tim Bick, Joint Assembly Chair

### 1. Background

- 1.1 In response to the Joint Assembly discussion on the Making Connections Consultation Feedback and the City Access Strategy at its meeting on Thursday 8th June 2023, the Executive Board and Joint Assembly Chairpersons agreed to hold an extraordinary joint meeting of the Executive Board and Joint Assembly for the sole purpose of providing an opportunity for Joint Assembly members to comment on the emerging Making Connection proposals.
- 1.2 This report is to provide the Executive Board with a summary of the main points of the discussion, recognising members of the Board were present to hear the debate first hand, so it can take this information into account in its decision making.

### 2.0 Making Connections Consultation Feedback and the City Access Strategy

- 2.1 In response to the request of the Joint Assembly at its 8th June meeting, potential alterations to the Sustainable Travel Zone (STZ) scheme parameters and rules had been combined to formulate three new illustrative scenarios, which were assessed alongside the consultation proposal and do nothing options, to ensure a wide range of possible scenarios were being considered. Members asked a range of questions about the scenarios.
- 2.2 Members discussed in detail the suggested approaches to low income discounts as set out in sections 9.13 – 9.17 of the report. This had been a particular issue arising from the earlier debate. The Joint Assembly felt that of the two approaches, the one that involved using existing benefits schemes seemed to be the logical approach. There was also interest in developing ideas around a low income approach in relation to public and sustainable transport benefits, about which information would be needed to understand the impact.

- 2.3 Members confirmed that they were content with the list of areas for further consideration in any scenario, as set out in paragraph 9.18 of the report.
- 2.4 The Joint Assembly had a lengthy discussion on the assessment of the illustrative scenarios set out in section 10 of the report. There was a view from some members that all options should remain on the table, including the original proposal. There was a suggestion that the 'Do Nothing' option would be better described as the 'No STZ' option. The discussion focused on options 1 and 2 and ideas by which they could be amended. There was a willingness from members of the Joint Assembly to see a focus on these two options and how they could be blended, to reflect members' conversation, as a next stage of developing this proposal.
- 2.5 There was strong support for a residual number of free days being included in a package, though some questioning of the high initial provision in scenario 2. There was less support for zero charge between peaks. Several members expressed interest in flexible charging over a seven day period, rather than five, though officers advised that widening the proposal to the weekend may be considered beyond the scope of what had been consulted on. Members asked for consideration of the difference in operating costs between various options be considered and therefore the net gain.
- 2.6 A number of other points were raised that had not been discussed before and members agreed they should be highlighted as issues which could usefully be looked at in more detail. These included:
- The variability of the way a STZ worked and how that could be delivered.
  - The importance of supporting behaviour change as part of confidence building in the run up to the introduction of a STZ.
- 2.7 The Joint Assembly discussed the phased introduction of bus services outlined in paragraph 11.4 of the report and expressed support for the principles for bus network design. Comments on the detailed proposals included reference to:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connectivity between bus, rail and cycle throughout the greater Cambridge area not just the city was essential.</li> <li>• Park and Ride services should be much better with a full range of travel hubs. The same applied to train stations.</li> <li>• More should be done to link bus services with train stations in rural areas recognising some were currently underutilised.</li> <li>• There was a need for more secure cycle parking in key locations, including at travel hubs and adjacent to bus stops.</li> <li>• More work was needed to look at where the congestion coming into the city was happening and where the gaps were in bus services coming into the city.</li> <li>• Connections to Cambridge North and the whole issue of it being in and out of the STZ should be looked at again.</li> <li>• Bus timetables should take account of a range of factors, including shift patterns at Addenbrookes.</li> </ul> |
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connecting small rural communities both to bus and cycle routes was very important; maybe with new look bus service to improve connectivity.</li> <li>• Fairness across the board was critical and when looking at improved bus services it was important to think carefully about that.</li> <li>• Care should be taken when setting fares, especially for families and people travelling in groups. This should be weighed against the cost of the STZ, otherwise there would be no incentive not to drive.</li> <li>• More money should be spent on bus lanes and infrastructure improvements.</li> <li>• Ideally park and ride sites should be sufficiently far outside the city centre so cars coming into didn't have to queue to get in and giving busses better access.</li> </ul>
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2.8 Members discussed and commented on the potential priority improvements to be implemented before an STZ would start. Comments on the detailed proposals included reference to:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• While focusing on improving bus services, it was important not to lose sight of the holistic picture and the need to couple this with behavioural change and improved walking and cycling improvements.</li> <li>• It was also important not to lose focus on interchange points recognising that for the scheme to succeed, tens of thousands of people had to be persuaded to make a different travel choice.</li> <li>• It was suggested that resources could be ring fenced to fund other types of modal shift to make sure this was not overlooked.</li> <li>• The list should mention 'reliability' recognising the importance of having a dependable service.</li> <li>• Subsidising bus fares was not always the answer to changing behaviour and provision of a free bus service that no one used was cited as an example of this. It would therefore be important to monitor the impact of any bus subsidy.</li> <li>• Plans should include ways of seeking feedback from users on how things were going.</li> <li>• Reviewing the network and making sure gaps in routes were filled was really important.</li> <li>• It was key to find a way of reducing delays caused by people getting on and off busses; introducing some form of tap on tap off payment system.</li> <li>• The differential between bus fares and STZ charge was critical in making the system work.</li> </ul>
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2.9 Commenting on the recommendations being presented to the Executive Board, members asked that a timeline be added to recommendation (d) on work with the Combined Authority on bus reform. It was also suggested that the Executive Board might want to add something on communications and transparency; highlighting the importance of making sure the public knows what's happening and what to expect, when.