

Improving Transport and Connectivity for Cambridgeshire

To: Highways and Transport Committee

Meeting Date: 04 July 2023

From: Executive Director of Place and Sustainability

Electoral division(s): All

Key decision: No

Forward Plan ref: n/a

Outcome: To note the strategic framework to deliver the transport ambition for a connected, sustainable, safe, efficient, and integrated transport network in the County. To note the overall strategy to reimagine and reform local bus services, including consideration of introducing a franchise model for commissioning and delivery of buses, and to note the consultation of Making Connections.

Recommendation:

- a) Note the overall current strategic objectives of the Council and its partners for the improvement of transport and connectivity for the County as outlined at 1.1
- b) Note the current activities on the implementation of the Bus Strategy, and the relationship between the City Deal Programme and the Bus Reform Model being advanced by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA)
- c) Note the results of the Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) Making Connections consultation as set out in Appendix A
- d) Note that, subject to identification of a preferred option, any future decision will require the development of an Outline Business Case (OBC) that would be considered by Full Council in October 2023.

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1 Background

A transport network fit for Cambridgeshire's future

- 1.1 The County Council, and its partners, has transformational ambitions for the county's transport network, to provide a modern, integrated cross-county system, of sustainable, safe, efficient, and reliable travel options, travel that supports our wider climate, social, health place and productivity goals. There are a range of local authority schemes, and third-party schemes (for example rail investment being delivered by the East West Rail Company and Network Rail), that form part of a larger co-ordinated programme of measures to support sustainable growth and create places that meet people's needs.
- 1.2 The County Council recognises the following overarching goals for our transport network as set out by our partners at the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) and by the Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP):
 - **Productivity:** transport enabling employers and people to achieve their potential, supporting efficiency, innovation and creating prosperity. Transport that connects all new and existing communities sustainably, so that residents can easily access good employment opportunities. Tackle the endemic congestion in Cambridgeshire so that peoples' time can be used for more valuable and fulfilling purposes.
 - **Connectivity:** bringing people and communities closer together. Support social inclusion through the provision of an urban and rural sustainable transport network that is affordable and accessible for all.
 - **Safety:** Embed a safe systems approach into all planning and transport operations to achieve vision zero – zero fatalities or serious injuries on our roads.
 - **Health:** Provide healthy streets, and high-quality public realm that puts people first and promotes active lifestyles, improving our air quality.
 - **Environment:** Deliver a transport network that protects and enhances our natural, historic, and built environments
 - **Climate:** Reduce emissions to net zero to minimise the impact of transport and travel on climate change
- 1.3 Public Transport has a key role to play in delivering our ambition. Our goal should be an integrated network where the travelling public can seamlessly shift between services and modes of travel, depending on their needs.
- 1.4 Covid-19 has had profound impacts on the way people worked, lived, and travelled, particularly during the lockdowns. Bus use was declining before the pandemic, and the industry is struggling to bounce back. There is a clear need to do things differently, to provide reliable, and affordable rural and urban networks connecting to places where people work, socialise, study and access services such as healthcare.
- 1.5 These paradigm shifting improvements are achievable, though this will require close partnership work, and significant funding. County Council Officers are working with the CPCA to shape bus strategy and secure funding in the following ways:
 - **Pressing Government** for additional funding to protect and enhance urban and rural bus services.
 - Securing **developer contributions** to network improvements through the planning process.

- Seizing **innovation funding** to develop smarter (autonomous), greener (electric) bus networks.
- Identifying opportunities to better **coordinate County Home to School, and Adult Social Care services with other bus services**, working closely with the CPCA, operators and transport providers to better integrate passenger services. This has the potential to deliver efficiencies and revenue savings in the commissioning of these services.
- **Reforming** the local bus network to provide significantly more local control and coordination of bus services.
- Maximising the extent to which our sustainable networks benefit from, and align with the **City Deal Programme of investment**, in terms of dedicated infrastructure, and associated initiatives.

Challenges

- 1.6 There are a number of challenges relating to improving public transport in Cambridgeshire. The current bus market outside London has been deregulated since 1985, which means that private operators provide services in accordance with their own commercial strategy, rather than the connectivity needs of the community at large. The deregulated market limits scope for an integrated bus offer (e.g., simplified 'one network' ticketing and timetabling) and can lead to unsustainable competition on busy corridors, as well a lack of connectivity in rural areas.
- 1.7 Through the pandemic, bus operators were dependent on bus subsidies from central government, which are being rapidly phased out. Last autumn, Stagecoach announced the withdrawal of 18 services in the CPCA area, and local subsidy was found by the CPCA to provide continued connectivity and access to key services and education opportunities. Looking ahead, the CPCA and its partners are seeking an approach to provide the best possible tendered bus network within the funding available. The current approach is limited as decision makers do not have a clear process and sufficient data.

Opportunities for public transport improvement in the short and medium term.

The Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP) and local transport strategies

- 1.8 The Local Transport and Connectivity Plan sets the strategic direction for transport policy in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Underneath the policy umbrella of the LTCP, the CPCA, the County Council and Peterborough City Council have a number of further strategies that set out how the policies in the LTCP will be addressed in detail at a more local level. These strategies include the Bus Strategy, Bus Service Improvement Plan, and transport strategies covering district areas and other transport topics such as Active Travel. The LTCP and its family of strategy documents will shape transport scheme pipeline development, and prioritisation for implementation across the Combined Authority area:

The case for rail improvements

- 1.9 Work is continuing with partners to push hard for Ely Area Capacity Enhancements, which would significantly increase the capacity of the rail network north of Cambridge. The Snailwell Loop is needed for direct rail services between Ely, Soham, Newmarket and Cambridge. East-West Rail would also increase the capacity for rail transport to the west. These projects require considerable additional funding, which will need to come from central government, rather than through local decision making.

Bus Strategy and Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP)

- 1.10 The Bus Strategy is part of the CPCA's LTCP suite of documents and sets out a bold ambition to double bus patronage by 2030. The draft Bus Strategy was consulted on between 13th January to 24th February of this year and received a very positive response. Overall, the consultation provided strong support for the Strategy with over 80% of the respondents agreeing, or strongly agreeing with the Vision, Aims and Principles of the strategy. There was strong support for the level of ambition, alongside an eagerness to see the detail of how the strategy would be implemented. While the Strategy is not intended to provide this detail, it does provide the link to the projects and programmes where the detail will be developed, for example the Bus Service Improvement Plan. The CPCA Bus Strategy was approved by the CPCA Board in March 2023.
- 1.11 In response to the [National Bus Strategy: Bus Back Better](#) (March 2021), the CPCA produced a BSIP, which was submitted to the Department for Transport (DfT) in October 2021 and sought funding for bus service improvements. The CPCA was unsuccessful in securing BSIP funding and lessons are being learned through dialogue with central government officials around areas for improvement.
- 1.12 The DfT requires all Local Transport Authorities to review progress against their BSIP ambitions in October each year. The CPCA produced a BSIP Review document in November 2022, providing an update on matters relating to bus provision across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough since the original BSIP was produced. This set out progress with the LTCP and new Bus Strategy, as well as the decision to produce an entirely new BSIP to reflect these developments. The DfT has welcomed the approach being taken.
- 1.13 The BSIP is essentially an implementation plan for how the authority intends to deliver its ambitions for the bus network. It should be noted that there is no Government funding currently identified to implement the BSIP. The BSIP will be the mechanism to engage with Government for further bus funding.

The City Deal

- 1.14 The Greater Cambridge Partnership's (GCP's) public transport improvements and City Access strategy sits at the heart of the Greater Cambridge City Deal. They aim to address some of the major pressures on the local economy by reducing congestion and pollution, and by providing people with better, healthier, more sustainable options for their journeys. These aims align with the key objectives of the both the current Cambridge and Peterborough Local Transport Plan and the emerging Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP).

The City Deal Programme

- 1.15 The Greater Cambridge City Deal was signed on 19th June 2014 on behalf of five local partners (Cambridgeshire County Council, Cambridge City Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council, the Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Enterprise Partnership and the University of Cambridge) and HM Government. The City Deal was underpinned by a commitment to deliver transformative economic and sustainability benefits through investment in the transport network and through a collaborative governance framework.

- 1.16 The bulk of investment in the GCP's sustainable infrastructure plan is building new, high-quality, segregated infrastructure for active travel and public transport. Delivery of the GCP's infrastructure programme is underway with improvements being made across Greater Cambridge over the next four years. This capacity is necessary to meet the growth proposals as outlined in the current adopted Local Plans of Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council.
- 1.17 In addition, the City Access Programme has explored ways to deliver better, more competitive sustainable transport, particularly within the constrained city environment including the narrow historic streets in the centre of Cambridge. The City Access Programme comprises the following parts:
- The **Making Connections programme** – focusing on transformational improvements to the bus network, improving the city's active travel environment, and reducing congestion and pollution.
 - Development of an **Integrated Parking Strategy**, including the delivery of further Residents' Parking Schemes.
 - Making best use of the city's road network, through a **Road Network Hierarchy Review**.
 - Exploring ways to reduce commercially generated congestion through **Freight Consolidation**.
- 1.18 To support the development of the programme, extensive technical work has been undertaken by the GCP. This technical work has shown that:
- Any package needs to combine interventions to support the uptake of public transport with one or more measures to discourage car use to maximise impact and free up road space.
 - The scale of the challenge is such that significant measures are needed to address the issues.
 - The introduction of measures that discourage car use must be timed to ensure people have alternatives in place first.
- 1.19 In September 2021, the GCP Executive Board agreed to develop a package of options for improving bus services, expanding the cycling-plus network and managing road space in Cambridge. This built on earlier technical work and wide-ranging public engagement, including the Citizens' Assembly, considering how to significantly improve public transport and active travel and tackle congestion, greenhouse gas emissions and pollution in Greater Cambridge.
- 1.20 The GCP Executive Board agreed that the package should have at its core significantly improving bus services. Reallocating road space for active travel modes, and air quality improvements, including greening of the bus fleet, would also have an important role to play. In that context, of the package options presented in September 2021, Package 3c 'Better bus services for all', best met the objectives.
- 1.21 The Board agreed a roadmap commencing with an initial public consultation setting out proposals for improvements to the bus network and measures to prioritise road space for sustainable transport and provide an ongoing funding source for improvements. This first Making Connections consultation ran from 8th November to 20th December 2021.

Making Connections

- 1.22 On 12th July 2022 the Highways and Transport Committee delegated authority to the GCP to undertake a further detailed consultation on Making Connections. On 28th September 2022, the GCP Executive Board agreed the undertaking of this detailed public consultation on a specific proposed package of measures.
- 1.23 The package consulted upon last year contained three elements that were designed to collectively deliver significant improvements to the bus network in the Cambridge travel to work area. Those three elements are:
- **Transforming the Bus Network:** It was proposed that from mid-2023, the Making Connections Project will transform the bus network through new routes, additional services, cheaper fares, and longer operating hours.
 - **Investing in sustainable travel schemes:** Alongside the bus network improvements it was proposed to invest in new sustainable travel schemes, such as better walking and cycling links.
 - **Creating a Sustainable Travel Zone (STZ):** The final part of Making Connections is for the introduction of a STZ in the form of a road user charge. Under this proposal, a charge would be levied for driving within the zone between 7am and 7pm on weekdays, and money raised would fund improvements to the bus network and sustainable travel schemes. The consultation planned that the Zone would be gradually introduced starting in 2025 and intended to be fully operational in 2027/28. The introduction of the STZ would only commence once the first bus improvements had been implemented.

2 Main Issues

Bus Opportunities

Reform

- 2.1 On 29th May 2020 the CPCA Board endorsed the development of a Business Case to assess the bus franchising model of governance in the region. The decision was conditional on further and more detailed work being undertaken in relation to the bus franchising scheme by way of an Outline Business Case.
- 2.2 Due to the impact of Covid-19, the business case which was being prepared in 2020 was paused. The work to examine bus governance recommenced in early 2023 and the results of the Draft Outline Business Case will be reported back to the CPCA Board on 26th July 2023. The Draft Assessment will set out the considerations for the introduction of franchising against realistic alternative options.
- 2.3 If the CPCA Board decides to progress franchising the next step would be for independent auditors to review the assessment, ahead of a full public consultation on the Outline Business Case (commencing late 2023, concluding early 2024). The CPCA Board would consider the results of the consultation in early 2024, and ultimately a decision to implement would rest with the CPCA Mayor, with a decision in June 2024.

Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP)

- 2.4 The CPCA is working to develop a revised draft BSIP to be developed, then for a decision on a final BSIP in the autumn.

Network Review

- 2.5 The Bus Review workstream is required to enable the CPCA to make future decisions on a more structured and balanced basis. The CPCA and its partners are seeking an approach to transform the bus network to better suit the needs of the public. A decision was taken in 2022 to secure the existing network and tender services. Over the 2023/24 financial year, the Bus Network Review workstream needs to be established. The review will enable Leaders to make decisions for the 24/25 financial year for tendered services on a more structured and balanced basis.

Autonomous Vehicle Trial

- 2.6 The GCP and partners have secured funding from the latest Centre for Connected and Automated Vehicles (CCAV) competition to deliver two Autonomous Vehicle (AV) projects. Building on previous work in this area, the purpose of these projects is to gain a greater understanding of the progression of these technologies, the challenges and possibilities for safe integration of autonomy into the public transport system and the commercial case for deployments in the future. The two projects are:

- **Eastern Access Study:** The study will explore how Connected and Automated Mass Transit could be implemented in Cambridge to solve its complex transport problems. The study area is the corridor to the east which would enable connections from new developments in the east of Cambridge, including a new Park & Ride, to the rail network at Cambridge Station. The project has started and is due to finish in September 2023. The total project cost is £153,548 with a grant from CCAV of £92,474 and the remainder funded from contributions of the industrial partners in the project (ARUP and Costain).
- **Automated Mobility:** Deployment (Project Connector): The second successful bid secured £17.6M and will undertake an at-scale trial of on-demand self-driving vehicles with up to 13 electric vehicles providing passenger services that integrate with existing transport services within Cambridge. Services will operate on two sites where there are identified opportunities: Cambridge University's West Cambridge Campus and the Cambridge Biomedical Campus and will be undertaken in a phased manner over 12 months. Work to develop and test the vehicles has begun and will run for the next 12 months including extensive virtual and real-world testing scenarios. Following successful testing and validation, vehicles will begin running routes from Spring 2024 for up to 12 months. The total project costs are £17,563,648 with a grant of £8,772,218 from CCAV and the remainder of the funding being supplied by the industrial partners.

- 2.7 Beyond these projects, the GCP plans to continue to identify, test and roll out innovative transport solutions, ensuring that Cambridgeshire embraces and supports emerging technology.

Improving the bus network

- 2.8 Improvements to the bus network offer the fastest way to improve public transport in the immediate short term. However, for such improvements to be sustainable, long term public subsidy is likely to be needed. An STZ would present an opportunity for significant and sustained investment to significantly improve bus services, and bus franchising provides an opportunity to have more control over how that investment is made. The STZ was proposed because previous consultation and technical work suggested it would be

the only method of funding which has the potential to sustain the proposed bus network on its own, whilst also helping to reduce traffic and thereby improving bus performance in terms of journey speeds and service reliability.

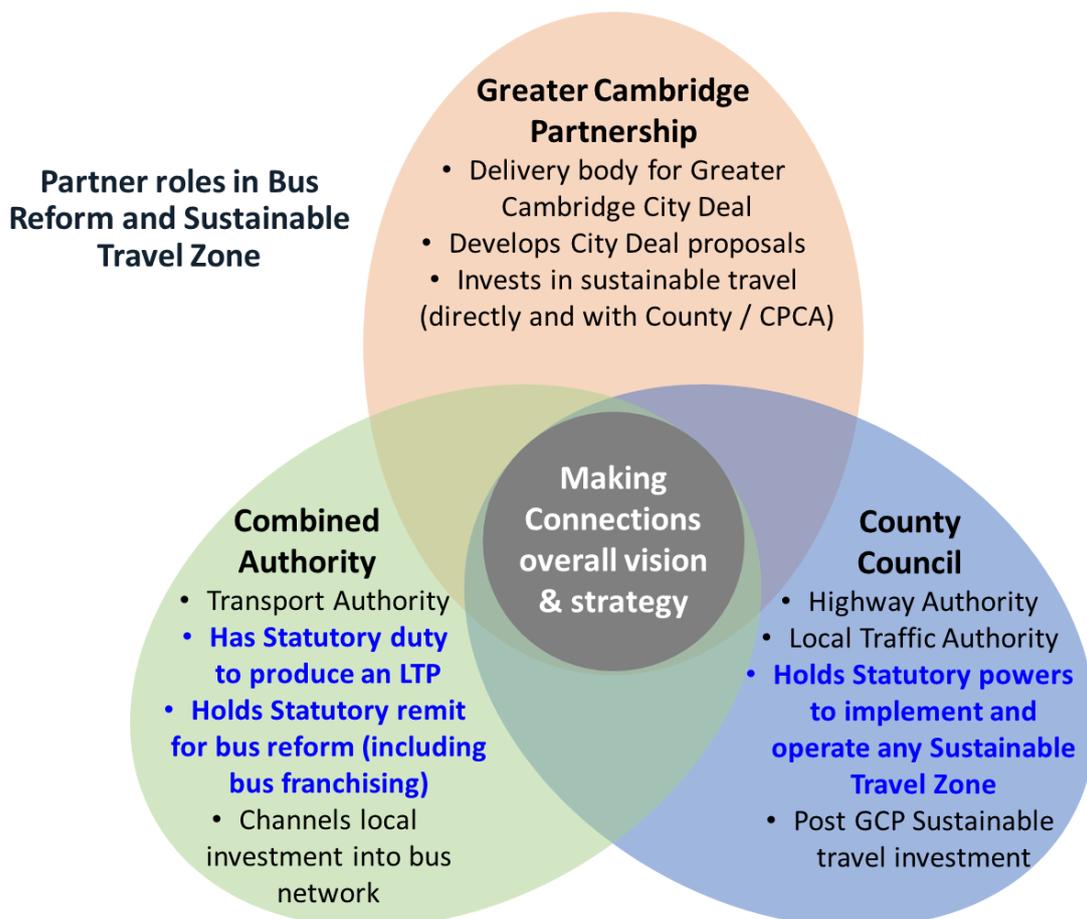
Timeline of decision making on Bus Reform

2.9 The timeline for decision making on Bus Reform by the CPCA is:

- **29 Nov 2023 – CPCA Board:** To consider whether to consult on Bus Franchising.
- **July 2024 – CPCA Mayor:** Decision on Bus Franchising.

2.10 These decisions are needed for bus reform to be implemented within the next 18 months. If the timetable for these decisions were not achieved, it is likely that commercial bus providers would make cuts to the existing services, given the pressures within the sector.

2.11 Bus Reform is not dependent on Making Connections, and decisions on the two proposals are separate. There would be potential for early and on-going investment into the bus network from the Making Connections programme. The bus franchising Outline Business Case would therefore consider how decisions taken on the STZ might influence a decision on franchising. This relationship has been reflected in the scenarios to be tested in the franchising business case.



Making Connections

2.12 Three options for addressing congestion and associated issues such as pollution and carbon emissions, and to generate revenue for bus network funding and sustainable

transport improvements were considered and consulted on by the GCP in the first Making Connections consultation in the autumn of 2021. The three options were:

- A pollution-based road user charge where a fee is levied for driving into a designated area with the aim being to reduce air pollution.
- A congestion-based road user charge (described as a “flexible charge”) with the aim being to reduce congestion (and thus also reduce air pollution), with a broader policy focus than just improving air quality as with a pollution-based charge.
- A parking charges option, which included higher parking charges and the establishment of a Workplace Parking Levy, where employers within a determined area pay a levy to fund improvements in transport and traffic management based on the number of parking places offered to their employees. Organisations could choose to either fund this directly or pass the cost on to the employees.

2.13 The “flexible charge” option was agreed to be taken forward to more detailed consultation by the GCP Executive Board on 28th September 2022.

Second Making Connections Consultation

2.14 The second Making Connection consultation undertaken by the GCP in late 2022 under delegated authority from this Committee sought views on a Sustainable Travel Zone (STZ) that would present an opportunity for significant and sustained investment to significantly improve bus servicing, and franchising provides an opportunity to have more control over how that investment is made.

2.15 The STZ would support investment in services, frequency, fare subsidy, bus priority, and complementary sustainable travel measures in Greater Cambridge and the travel to work area, whilst also tackling congestion. In order to provide revenue support for the investment in buses, a congestion-based road user charge would be introduced. Complementary sustainable travel measures could include:

- Enhanced waiting facilities (stops and shelters).
- New and enhanced walking and cycling infrastructure together with enhanced maintenance.
- Enhanced maintenance of bus routes.
- Road Network Hierarchy.
- Integrated and digital information and journey planning tools.
- Electric vehicles and charging infrastructure.
- Development of innovative technology.

2.16 The ongoing revenue could facilitate a programme of interventions to deliver on the vision, but investment and improvements could begin straight away.

Second consultation headlines

2.17 The GCP received 24,071 individual responses, and over 100 responses from organisations. **Appendix 1** of this paper presents the headline results of the consultation, while ongoing granular analysis is to follow and will shape the development of future technical work as part of the City Access Strategy.

2.18 A key outcome of the consultation that has been undertaken in relation to the Making Connections Programme is that people want to see significant improvements in bus

services. The County Council is committed to working with partners to deliver the network set out in the Making Connections consultation.

GCP Executive Board consideration of Making Connections

2.19 The GCP has considered the results of the consultation on the Making Connections proposals at the following meetings:

- 08 June 2023 – Joint Assembly
- 26 June 2023 – Extraordinary joint meeting of Executive Board and Joint Assembly
- 29 June 2023 – Executive Board

2.20 The Executive Board was asked to consider the following recommendations at their 29 June meeting:

“The Executive Board is invited to consider the contents of this [GCP Executive Board] paper and to recommend next steps. In particular, to:

- a) note the feedback from the 2022 Making Connections consultation, including the public survey, the accompanying opinion polling, organizational submissions, and stakeholder meetings;*
- b) informed by the feedback from the consultation, and the comments of the GCP Joint Assembly, note and comment on the range of scenarios for modifying the proposed scheme, set out in this paper in section 9;*
- c) request that GCP officers work with Cambridgeshire County Council officers to develop the technical assessment needed to present an Outline Business Case for further consideration by the GCP Executive Board, and by Cambridgeshire County Council, in Autumn 2023.*
- d) agree to work with the CPCA, as the Transport Authority, including the provision of resource, to input findings from the Making Connections consultation and technical work into the CPCA’s work on bus reform and review of the bus network; and*
- e) request that GCP officers develop proposals for the early introduction of a bus and sustainable travel package (as set out in section 11) based on the £50m of city deal funding provisionally allocated for this purpose, for decision at the GCP Executive Board meeting in December 2023.”*

2.21 Section 9 of the Executive Board report outlines potential alterations to the STZ parameters and rules in three illustrative scenarios responding to feedback received in the consultation. The options noted are:

- Consultation proposal
- Scenario 1: Peak hours only charging proposal.
- Scenario 2: Consultation charging proposal plus free days.
- Scenario 3: “Minimalist” option – hybrid of the scenarios 1 and 2
- Do nothing

2.22 Paragraphs 9.2 and 9.3 of the Executive Board report state:

*“9.2 These options were created with the aim of balancing the consultation feedback with the benefits and ability to deliver the scheme in a way that continues to meet its objectives. The options were **assessed alongside the***

consultation proposal and do nothing options, to ensure a wide range of possible scenarios are being considered.

9.3 *These are neither exhaustive nor final. There is scope to ‘mix and match’ elements of these proposals or to think of alternative proposals altogether that could be tested. This section lists additional questions that should be addressed (irrespective of which scenario(s) may be taken forward) through further technical work in response to consultation feedback. Any of these proposals could be phased-in differently over time. Further technical work to assess and refine a preferred scenario would be required to develop an Outline Business Case to take a decision to proceed.”*

2.23 With reference to paragraph 9.3, there are other potential funding mechanisms could be brought into play in advance of, instead of, or alongside an STZ. If brought into play, their potential to meet scheme objectives and deliver sufficient funding to deliver the bus network proposals would need to be assessed or re-assessed. These mechanisms include, but are not limited to:

- the STZ (as consulted on as part of the Making Connections consultation),
- a work-place parking levy,
- a mayoral precept,
- changes to the way in which the home to school transport budget is used, and
- direct subsidy from developers and large employers, as already happens with the U bus in Cambridge.

2.24 Of these options several would require further consultation or negotiation. The sustainable travel zone has already been consulted on, but considerable further work would be needed before it could be implemented.

2.25 There are also other measures which could be brought into play in advance of, instead of or alongside an STZ to manage traffic and improve bus speed and reliability including: closing roads to car traffic or reducing / removing on-and off-street parking availability.

2.26 The STZ has already been consulted on, and there is potentially City Deal funding available to forward fund improvements. There would be opportunity to start introducing changes to the bus network in early 2024 if a decision to proceed were taken, and if the funding were agreed by the GCP Executive Board as covered by recommendation e) to the GCP Board, noted in paragraph 2.20 above.

3 Alignment with ambitions

3.1 Net zero carbon emissions for Cambridgeshire by 2045, and our communities and natural environment are supported to adapt and thrive as the climate changes

- The County Council is committed to decarbonising Cambridgeshire by 2045. The strategic framework discussed in this paper supports our businesses and communities in overcoming private car dependency by providing attractive, affordable alternatives.

3.2 Travel across the county is safer and more environmentally sustainable

- The proposals set out a pathway to implementing attractive, sustainable alternatives to the private car, transforming the public transport offer, and our places, to create safer, more environmentally sustainable communities.

3.3 Health inequalities are reduced

- The transfer of trips away from private car use to public transport and active travel has a range of health benefits, including improved fitness of the population, and lower emissions of CO₂ and of pollutants such as nitrogen dioxide.
- The roll-out of electric buses is part of the BSIP and Making Connections and is particularly important for the reduction of emissions of fine particulates.
- The strategic transport framework set out in this report would provide an opportunity to focus investment on bus services that would support this priority across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough through bus reform, and on Active Travel infrastructure that would similarly support this priority.
- It is unclear that further funding will be available from Central Government to support Bus Service Improvement Plans. Funding will be needed to support such investment.

3.4 People enjoy healthy, safe, and independent lives through timely support that is most suited to their needs

- The transfer of trips away from private car use to public transport and active travel has a range of health benefits, including improved fitness of the population, and lower emissions of CO₂ and of pollutants such as nitrogen dioxide and fine particulates.
- More extensive public transport and active travel networks will increase the opportunity for independent living in many areas, as will increased frequencies and hours of operation of bus services.
- The strategic transport framework set out in this report would therefore provide an opportunity to focus investment on bus services that would support this priority across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough through bus reform, and on Active Travel infrastructure that would similarly support this priority.

3.5 Helping people out of poverty and income inequality

- The strategic transport framework set out in this report would provide an opportunity to focus investment on bus services that would support this priority across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough through bus reform, and on Active Travel infrastructure that would similarly support this priority.
- It is unclear that further funding will be available from Central Government to support Bus Service Improvement Plans. Funding will be needed to support such investment.

3.6 Places and communities prosper because they have a resilient and inclusive economy, access to good quality public services and social justice is prioritised

- The strategic transport framework set out in this report has the potential to provide affordable high quality bus services giving access to a greater range of destinations and services on a more frequent basis. Complementary Active Travel infrastructure can further improve accessibility.

3.7 Children and young people have opportunities to thrive

- The strategic transport framework set out in this report has the potential to provide affordable high quality bus services giving access to a greater range of destinations and services including improved ability to access education and employment opportunities across more hours of the day. Complementary Active Travel infrastructure can further improve accessibility for children and young people, including by providing safe high-quality links to education and employment.

4 Significant Implications

4.1 Resource Implications

The following bullet points set out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- The Making Connections proposals have been developed on the basis that they will be cost neutral to the Council, with income reinvested in the bus network and into improvements to and maintenance of the local transport network. Heads of Terms and associated agreements would be developed on this basis.
- Notwithstanding, if the proposals are taken forward, there will be very significant resource considerations associated with:
 - The taking forward the Full Business Case work (post October 2023) to develop the STZ proposals.
 - The implementation of the STZ and any supporting measures on the transport network in Cambridge.
 - Post implementation, for the management of the STZ including the collection and allocation of funding to support the bus network and other measures to which income may be allocated.
- The costs associated with the further development of the proposals, if taken forward, will continue to be funded from the City Deal.
- The Outline Business Case would set out implications in the areas noted above in more detail, to inform Full Council's consideration of the proposals.
- Furthermore, there are potential savings and efficiencies that could be delivered in relation to Home to School transport linked with the review and improvement of the bus network.

4.2 Procurement / Contractual / Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications

The following bullet points set out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- If, following consideration by Full Council, the Making Connections proposals are taken forward, there will be implications in this area which will be detailed in the Outline Business Case and in further reports to Council. These relate to:
 - The commissioning of work to deliver the STZ.
 - The commissioning of resource to manage the STZ.
 - The establishment of appropriate agreements and contractual arrangements between the County Council and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority to cover the allocation of funding from the Council as Charging Authority and the CPCA as Transport Authority with responsibility for partnership / franchise arrangements for the bus network.
- All procurements required will be compliant with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

4.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

The following bullet points set out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- As noted in paragraph 4.1 above, the Making Connections proposals have been developed on the basis that they will be cost neutral to the Council, with income reinvested in the bus network and into improvements to and maintenance of the local transport network.

- If, following consideration by Full Council, the Making Connections proposals are taken forward, there will be implications in this area which would be detailed in the Outline Business Case and in the covering report to Council. These relate to:
 - The statutory roles and legal responsibilities of the County Council in relation to charging schemes, and of the CPCA in relation to bus partnerships and bus franchising.
 - The financial implications of arrangements for the allocation of funding of the bus network between the County Council and the CPCA, where responsibilities and liabilities that fall to each party would need to be set out, including financial responsibilities and any financial risks associated with them.

4.4 Equality and Diversity Implications

The following bullet points set out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- An initial Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) was undertaken by the GCP in August 2022 to understand the distribution of Protected Characteristic Groups (PCGs) who might be impacted by the Making Connections proposals. This was supplemented with local knowledge of the three councils' equalities officers, and preliminary consultation feedback from the autumn 2022 Making Connections public consultation.
- EqIA findings fed into the analysis of the options and scenarios referred to in paragraph 2.21 above, helping to score the Scenarios on their likely propensity to improve quality of life, with regard for to the PCGs present in Greater Cambridge.
- The bus and sustainable travel improvements of the scale possible in the Making Connections proposal and in Scenarios 1, 2 and 3 (as discussed in paragraph 2.21) would all have benefits across all protected characteristic groups (PCGs). However, the magnitude of benefit each proposed scenario would deliver is dependent on the funding available for implementing the bus improvements.
- Choices about how available bus and sustainable travel revenue is spent could also have an impact on who receives the greatest benefit, depending on service frequency, hours of operation, the locality of routes and the socio-demographic profile of the areas they connect. Variations in time periods in which any charging options applied might have different impacts on different groups.
- Further detail on equality and diversity impacts of the Making Connections proposals can be found in [paragraphs 10.23 to 10.32 of the 29 June report to the GCP Executive Board](#), and in paragraphs 66 to 70 of **Appendix 1** below.
- In addition, a Social and Distributional Impacts report would be required as part of the Outline Business Case for the Making Connections proposals either as currently constituted or amended.

4.5 Engagement and Communications Implications

The report sets out in paragraphs 2.12 to 2.18, and in **Appendix 1**, the successful exercise to facilitate local input into the Making Connections proposals, which was taken up by a record number of individual respondents.

4.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement

Local Members had the opportunity to engage through the consultation, and many Local Members were involved in the conversation around the proposals that took place in the consultation.

4.7 Public Health Implications

There are no direct implications from the report, but if taken forward, the Making Connections proposals should lead to broadly positive health outcomes due to improved air quality and increased physical activity.

4.8 Climate Change and Environment Implications on Priority Areas:

4.8.1 Implication 1: Energy efficient, low carbon buildings.

Positive/neutral/negative Status:

Explanation: There are no implications in this area.

4.8.2 Implication 2: Low carbon transport.

Positive/neutral/negative Status: Positive

Explanation: If taken forward, the proposals outlined in this report would reduce vehicular traffic and increase the use of public transport and active modes in the Greater Cambridge area and the wider Cambridge Travel to Work area. This in turn would reduce carbon emissions from transport.

4.8.3 Implication 3: Green spaces, peatland, afforestation, habitats and land management.

Positive/neutral/negative Status: Neutral

Explanation: There are no implications in this area.

4.8.4 Implication 4: Waste Management and Tackling Plastic Pollution.

Positive/neutral/negative Status: Neutral

Explanation: There are no implications in this area.

4.8.5 Implication 5: Water use, availability and management:

Positive/neutral/negative Status: Neutral

Explanation: There are no implications in this area.

4.8.6 Implication 6: Air Pollution.

Positive/neutral/negative Status: Positive

Explanation: If taken forward, the proposals outlined in this report would reduce vehicular traffic and increase the use of public transport and active modes in the Greater Cambridge area and the wider Cambridge Travel to Work area. This in turn would reduce emissions of pollutants from general traffic. It is however very important to note that for benefits in air quality to be maximised, the bus fleet will need to be fully electrified.

4.8.7 Implication 7: Resilience of our services and infrastructure, and supporting vulnerable people to cope with climate change.

Positive/neutral/negative Status: Neutral

Explanation: There are no direct implications in this area.

5 Source documents

5.1 Making Connections documents:

- Cambridge County Council Highways and Transport committee, 12th July 2022 Delegation to GCP to consult (Agenda item 15, recommendations d) and e))
<https://cambridgeshire.cmis.uk.com/ccclive/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/1920/Committee/62/Default.aspx>
- GCP Executive Board Report, 28th September 2022 (Agenda item 7, “Public Transport and City Access Strategy”)
<https://cambridgeshire.cmis.uk.com/ccclive/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/1853/Committee/26/Default.aspx>
- GCP Joint Assembly Report, 8th June 2023 (Agenda item 10, “Making Connections Consultation Feedback and the City Access Strategy”)
<https://cambridgeshire.cmis.uk.com/ccclive/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/2121/Committee/36/SelectedTab/Documents/Default.aspx>
- GCP Extraordinary joint meeting of the Executive Board and Joint Assembly, 26th June 2023
<https://cambridgeshire.cmis.uk.com/ccclive/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/2223/Committee/26/Default.aspx>
- GCP Executive Board Report, 29th June 2023
<https://cambridgeshire.cmis.uk.com/ccclive/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/2125/Committee/26/Default.aspx>
- Making Connections – detail of 2021 and 2022 consultations
<https://www.greatercambridge.org.uk/sustainable-transport-programme/city-access-programme/making-connections>
- Making Connections 2022 Consultation Report, May 2023
<https://www.greatercambridge.org.uk/asset-library/Sustainable-Transport/Sustainable-Travel-Programme/City-Access/Making-Connections/Making-Connections-22/MC22-consultation-report.pdf>

5.2 Combined Authority and County Council transport policy documents:

- Emerging Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Transport and Connectivity Plan – See agenda item 6 appendices at:
<https://cambridgeshirepeterboroughcagov.cmis.uk.com/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/2223/Committee/63/SelectedTab/Documents/Default.aspx>
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Bus Strategy
<https://cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/documents/transport/buses/Cambridgeshire-Peterborough-Combined-Authority-Bus-Strategy-March-2023.pdf>
- Transport Strategy for Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire
<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/travel-roads-and-parking/transport-plans-and-policies/cambridge-city-and-south-cambs-transport-strategy>

Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance? Yes

Name of Financial Officer: David Parcell

Have the procurement/contractual/ Council Contract Procedure Rules implications been cleared by the Head of Procurement and Commercial? Yes

Name of Officer: Clare Ellis

Has the impact on statutory, legal and risk implications been cleared by the Council's Monitoring Officer or Pathfinder Legal? Yes

Name of Legal Officer: Emma Duncan

Have the equality and diversity implications been cleared by your EqIA Super User? Yes

Name of Officer: David Allatt

Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications? Yes

Name of Officer: Christine Birchall

Have any localism and Local Member involvement issues been cleared by your Service Contact? Yes

Name of Officer: David Allatt

Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health? Yes or No

Name of Officer: Iain Green

If a Key decision, have any Climate Change and Environment implications been cleared by the Climate Change Officer? n/a

Appendix 1: Summary of Making Connections consultation results

The full Consultation Report 2022 is available at <https://www.greatercambridge.org.uk/asset-library/Sustainable-Transport/Sustainable-Travel-Programme/City-Access/Making-Connections/Making-Connections-22/MC22-consultation-report.pdf>

Methods of communication

1. A questionnaire was produced for the public consultation which could be accessed online at the Consult Cambs web address, with hard copies of this being made available from GCP by calling a telephone number. The phone number was also made available for people that were having trouble completing the questionnaire, or who had any questions about the questions posed.
2. It was possible to stay informed about the scheme by visiting the project webpage, to view materials and access an interactive Microsoft Power BI map which provided additional information on the bus proposals and could be viewed on the project webpage. This map allowed viewers to select individual locations and see a summary of the current 'Before' bus connections and the proposed 'After' services, including details such as the cost of tickets, first bus, last bus, and proposed service frequencies. This level of detail meant that those living within the proposed network area would be able to look in depth at what was being proposed in their locality.
3. In addition to the interactive bus map, there were more traditional means of viewing the information including brochures and leaflets. These could be accessed via the project website and were available to view in printed form (hard copy) at local libraries.
4. A social media presence was also maintained throughout the consultation on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter relating to the Making Connections proposals.
5. Accessible copies of the Making Connections information were made available in large print, Braille, Easy Ready format, audio tape and in other languages. This was to ensure the highest level of accessibility for those interested in the proposals, regardless of how they preferred to receive the information.
6. To raise awareness in the local community, a leaflet drop was undertaken with communities living in Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire.
7. The public consultation was also publicised more widely in the local media. This includes being publicised on multiple occasions via local newspapers, online news sites, TV and radio.

Consultation events

8. There were a combination of consultation events hosted in-person or online. This meant that interested members of the public would have opportunity to join the consultation events either virtually or in person, depending on their preference. The events were widely advertised by GCP, with details included on the Making Connections webpage. The full details of these events can be found in the appended Consultation Report.
9. The timings of events were selected to be well ahead of the busy pre-Christmas period (the consultation ended on 23 December 2022) with the final event on the 12 December meaning that there were still 10 days for respondents to give their feedback on the

proposals. It is important in line with Gunning Principle #3 for adequacy of consultation, namely that there is adequate time for consideration and response.

10. The consultation events were staffed by representatives of GCP, Cambridge City Council, Cambridgeshire County Council, South Cambridgeshire Council, and consultant support. These staff were on hand to provide detail and answer questions raised by those interested in the Making Connections proposals. The mixture of virtual and in-person meetings meant that there were opportunities to engage with those who could not attend an event in person and also for those that do not have access to a computer.
11. The virtual events were hosted online via Microsoft Teams or Zoom, commencing with a short presentation and then allowing the opportunity for attendees to comment or ask questions. A chat facility was used, and any questions posed were read out by a moderator so that these could be answered by the technical team. 2.19 The in-person events made use of display banners incorporating information about the Making Connections proposals, spread throughout the venue. These banners included information presented in the consultation brochure, and illustrative bus maps, brochures and flyers were made available in hard copy on tables at the venue.
12. The events were planned to cover different areas of the city itself as well as towns located across Cambridgeshire, Suffolk (Newmarket) and Essex (Saffron Walden).

Targeted group meetings

13. During the course of the consultation, GCP arranged targeted meetings with a range of groups likely to have interest in the Making Connections proposals, or from groups and interests that are less commonly heard from in public consultations. These events allowed GCP to delve deeper into the issues surrounding the implementation of the bus improvements, the introduction of the Sustainable Travel Zone (STZ) and active travel enhancements, or to get particular perspectives from vulnerable or interested groups.
14. The majority of these events were held during the main consultation period, though some meetings also took place in advance of the public consultation, meanwhile another four additional groups were held after the closure of the consultation. The details of all these meetings can be found in Table 2-2 and Appendix C of the [Consultation Report](#).
15. The consultation report focuses on the meetings and feedback received through the formal consultation period but as a matter of good practice GCP officers have continued, and will continue, to engage with relevant stakeholders whatever next steps are taken.

Representative polling

16. A demographically representative poll was also undertaken in addition to the data collection methods used in the consultation. The poll was a study of 1000 residents in the Cambridge Travel to Work Area that was conducted between 15th and 22nd December 2022. Respondents to the poll provided answers to all questions. Key profiling questions were asked in addition to broadly similar questions to those used in the consultation questionnaire and statistical analysis was conducted in the same manner. It should be noted that questions in the poll contained both a 'don't know' and 'neither' response option which for consistency have been considered together for comparison to the 'don't know' option in the questionnaire.
17. Results from the poll were looked at in conjunction with the questionnaire responses to demonstrate results from different data collection methods.

Methodology

18. The consultation survey included a mixture of closed questions (with fixed response options) and open-ended question (which capture responses in an open text format). Full details of the methodology can be found in Chapter 3 of the [Consultation Report](#).
19. Closed questions were analysed by frequency counts of the responses indicated, with some cross-tabulation of these questions against other key demographic metrics, such as respondent characteristics and location-based information such as postcodes.
20. The qualitative views captured by open-ended questions were coded using a 'codeframe' which allowed a thematic summary of the issues raised in each response. The codeframe was developed by reading through a subset of responses and identifying common issues raised within these, with a unique code being associated to each issue. Development of the codeframe continued throughout the analysis, to allow specific points which arose while working through the dataset to be added.

Consultation response

21. The table below shows the channels for engagement and response during the consultation, and the number of those who participated via each method.

Channels for engagement and response rate during Making Connections

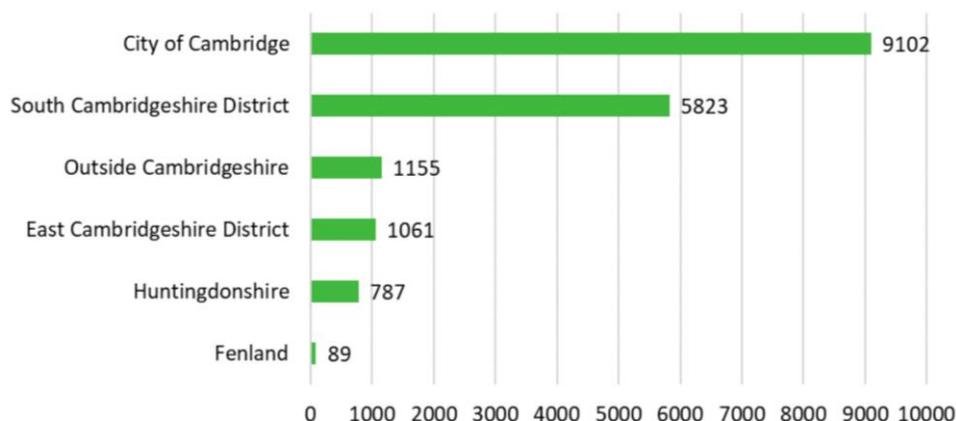
Method	Number	Type
Questionnaire responses	24,071	Online and hard copy
Emails	894	Online
Letters	10	Hard copy
Organisation responses	149	Online and hard copy
Stakeholder group meetings and outreach events	119	Meeting notes and feedback
Social media	2,176	Comments on Making Connections posts
Demographically representative poll	1,000	Online

22. Demographic details were provided by the 24,071 respondents who submitted feedback via the questionnaire online or in hard copy only. This information was not obtained for the other response channels, although the sampling for the poll was representative of the area's demography.
23. A detailed breakdown of the characteristics of survey respondents is included in the appended report. Based on the information provided in the response to the survey, survey respondents were:
 - On average older than the population of Cambridgeshire (with a record proportion of under-25s responding to this consultation, but still lower than the proportion of under 25s in the population at large)
 - More likely to be employed or self-employed and less likely to be not in paid employment than the average.

- Otherwise broadly similar to the population of Cambridgeshire in terms of sex, gender identity, ethnicity and disability.
- More likely to be from Greater Cambridge than the rest of Cambridgeshire or the wider Travel to Work area.

24. Of approximately 18,000 respondents who provided their postcode details, just under 17,000 of respondents were from Cambridgeshire, of which around 9,100 were from the City of Cambridge and 5,800 from South Cambridgeshire. 1,155 responses to the consultation survey came from outside of Cambridgeshire.

Geographic breakdown of respondents (n=18,107)



Source: Making Connections 2022 public consultation survey

Consultation findings

25. The [Consultation Report](#) represents the first step in summarising and analysing findings from the Making Connections 2022 consultation.

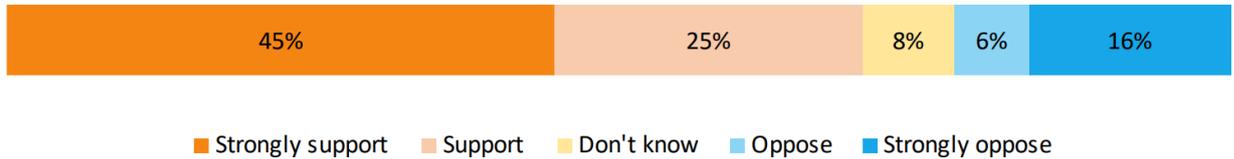
Analysis undertaken to date, and still to come

26. With over 24,000 survey responses including over 145,000 individual free text responses it has been a significant task to process, code and begin to analyse the information. The work to process the survey data completed in May 2023 and the ensuing consultation report has been prepared rapidly to allow for first findings to be made public as soon as possible and to support decision makers in thinking about next steps.
27. There was a substantial amount information gathered during the consultation. Not just the survey, but records from the targeted meetings, organisational responses and representative polling. This first level of analysis aims to draw out the headline findings and key issues for decision makers to consider when deciding whether and how to proceed with the proposals, and whether to make fundamental changes to the scheme design.
28. Any future technical work to develop proposals would be informed by the detailed consultation findings.
29. Likewise, where people flagged concerns about, for example, the proposed exemptions for people with disabilities, the Equalities Impact Assessment and the Discounts, Exemptions and Reimbursement elements of any future work to develop proposals would incorporate the detail of those responses to understand and design for specific concerns expressed.

Views on the proposed bus network improvement package

30. The majority of responses across the consultation survey, the opinion polling, stakeholder responses and the targeted meetings were in agreement that the bus network across Greater Cambridge is in need of improvement and were supportive of the vision set out.

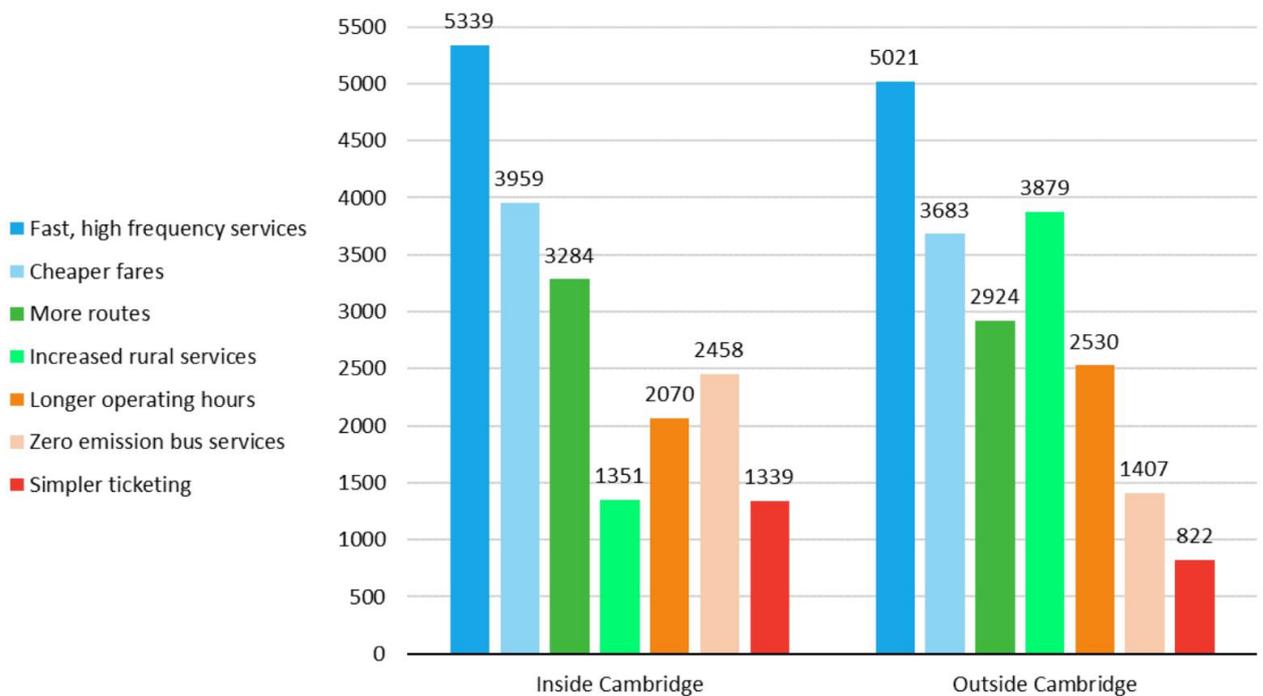
To what extent do you support or oppose the proposals for bus improvements and fare reductions? (n=22,908)



Source: Making Connections 2022 public consultation survey

31. When asked for their feedback on the package as set out, the most common comment was that we must ensure that buses are reliable and more frequent; and that improvements are much needed and should be delivered quickly. When asked the order of priority for improvements the most common response was fast, high frequency services, and the second most common was cheaper fares.

What bus improvements would you want to see delivered first (respondents inside Cambridge and those outside the city)?



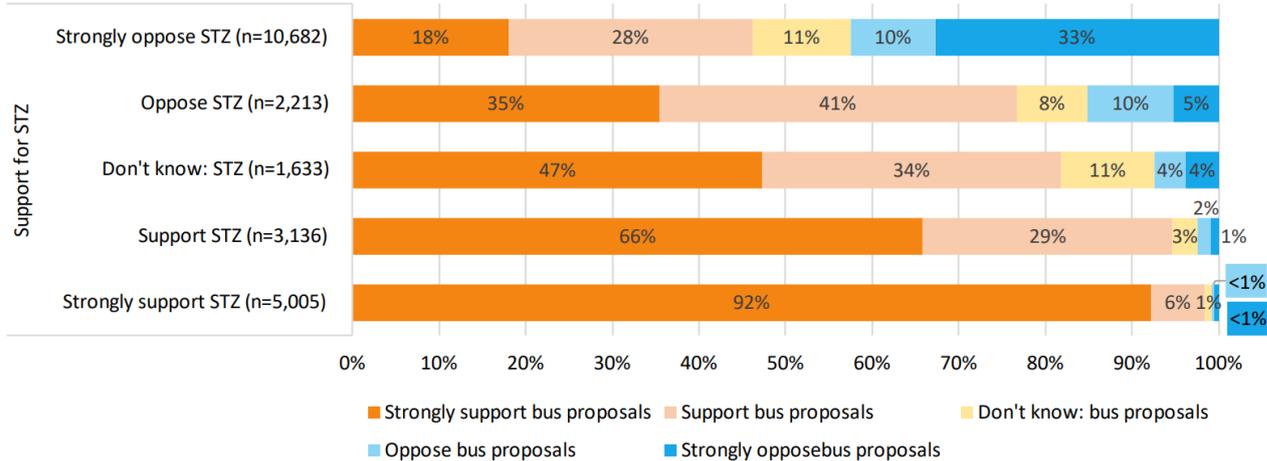
Source: Making Connections 2022 public consultation survey

32. Organisations who submitted feedback to the consultation were also generally supportive of the bus improvements and agreed that the improvements should be made prior to the implementation of the STZ. Safety concerns were raised by a number of organisations who wanted to ensure residents would be safe should they rely more on the bus to travel.

Suggestions for additional lighting and better shelter at bus stops were made. The University of Cambridge Disabled Staff Network also stated that those living with a disability can struggle to use the bus and often required extra support to do so and how this was being addressed in the proposals. A common theme in feedback from organisations regarding the bus improvements was that the people of Cambridge needed reliable and affordable public transport.

- 33. Support for the proposed bus network remains strong even among those who said they do not support the proposals for the STZ as a means of delivering it. 76% of those who oppose the STZ and 46% of those who strongly oppose the STZ nevertheless have expressed that they do still support the future bus vision. A similar pattern of support is evidence for the sustainable travel vision. Decision makers therefore need to consider whether it is possible to make changes to the scheme that address people’s concerns about the STZ but still are able to deliver at least some of the proposed bus and sustainable improvements that were set out in the Making Connections consultation.

Breakdown to show relationship between support for bus improvements vs support for STZ



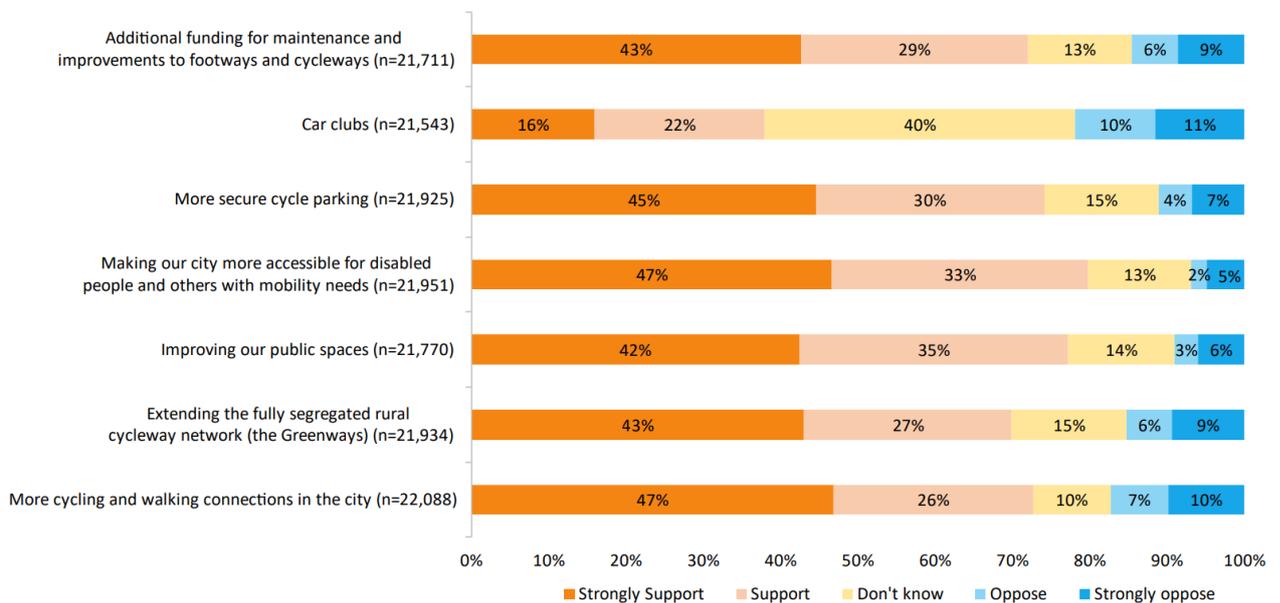
Source: Making Connections 2022 public consultation survey

- 34. Participants shared concerns about safety and security on, and accessing, the bus network, especially late at night and especially for women, younger and older people travelling alone.
- 35. There was clear feedback from the consultation survey but also from targeted meetings and stakeholder responses that people cannot envisage or do not believe that bus service improvements will be made, and public trust in the bus network is clearly very low. When asked about support for franchising (taking the bus network into direct public control) 49% of survey respondents were supportive, with a further 29% saying they didn’t know. Further analysis would consider whether ‘don’t know’ reflects a lack of understanding of the bus regulatory environment and the implications of franchising, or an ambivalence about whether franchising is the right approach. The Mayor of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough has set out his intention to consider franchising the bus network, and an update on timescales is expected imminently. The legal process requires an independent audit of the business case, to take place over summer after which a decision will be taken whether to proceed to public consultation on the issue. A Mayoral decision whether or not to proceed with franchising would then be due in June 2024.

Views on the proposed sustainable travel improvement package

- 36. We have heard strong support for proposed sustainable travel improvements through the consultation last year, including many people reminding us that the proposed Making Connections package must not be allowed to become solely about the bus network, but about the wider packages of softer and harder interventions to support a range of sustainable travel alternatives to car.
- 37. Consultation survey responses report upwards of 70% support for all aspects of the sustainable transport proposals. The exception to this was car clubs where 40% of respondents said they do not know whether they support proposals. Future analysis of the free text responses would aim to understand whether this reflects a lack of knowledge about car clubs, or an ambivalence about whether they should be part of the package.

To what extent do you support or oppose additional improvements to walking and cycling, accessibility and public spaces?



Source: Making Connections 2022 public consultation survey

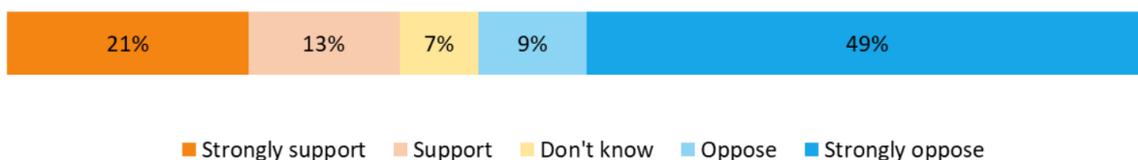
- 38. When asked if there are other improvements that consultation survey respondents would like to see funded, the top answer (excluding those that were already part of the proposed package of measures) was that STZ revenues should also fund improvements for drivers such as road maintenance and pothole repair. This sentiment also came across in stakeholder discussions.
- 39. When asked about suggestions for other funding sources, respondents cited increased council tax, direct funding from businesses and universities or central Government.

Views on the proposed Sustainable Travel Zone

- 40. The STZ elements of the proposals aim to provide both the traffic reduction to allow buses to run faster and more reliably, and an ongoing revenue stream to fund service improvements and fare subsidies.

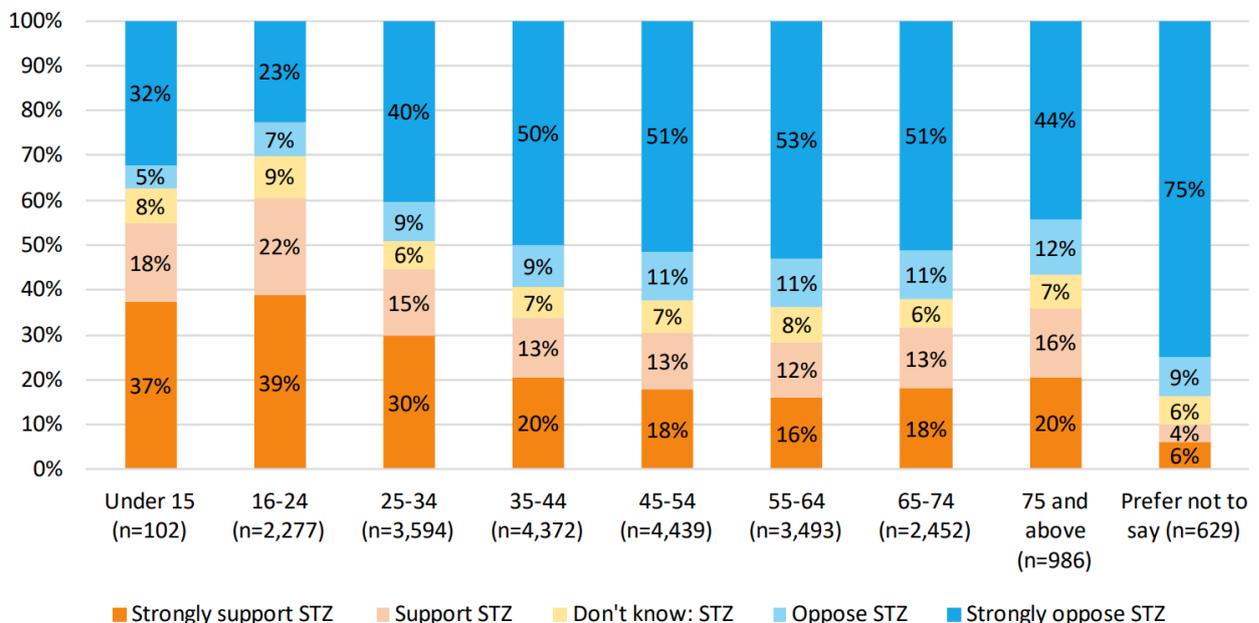
- 41. This element of the Making Connections received less, or more cautious, support than the bus and sustainable travel investments proposed, with a majority of consultation survey respondents opposed to the STZ as proposed.
- 42. Many organisational stakeholders from business and key institutions across the city expressed support in principle for the propositions but also concerns about the impact on their own staff (in particular those on lower incomes, or those who worked irregular hours and may therefore struggle to rely on public transport).
- 43. 34% of consultation survey respondents were supportive of the STZ as the means of delivering the vision set out in Making Connections, and 58% opposed it. When compared with demographically representative polling, opinion was more muted with approximately similar levels of support, but a much higher level of 'don't know' or 'neither support nor oppose' and much less expression of strong support or oppose.

To what extent do you support or oppose the introduction of an STZ to fund improvements to bus services, walking and cycling? (n=23,769)



Source: Making Connections 2022 public consultation survey

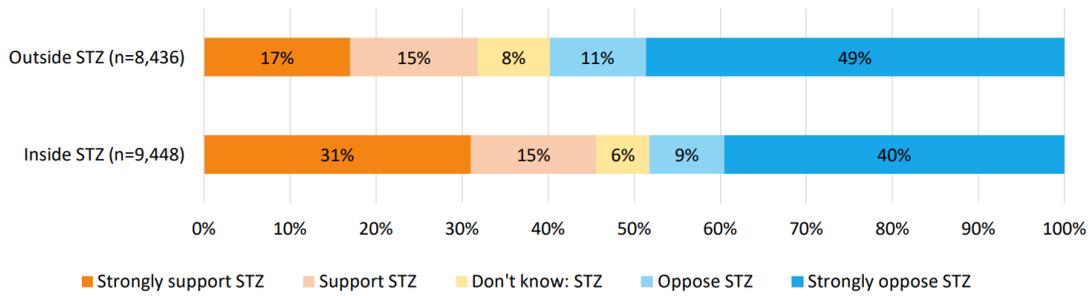
- 44. Younger people are much more likely to support the STZ than older people. In general, support for the STZ declines with age with the exception of over 75s who have a higher than average level of support for the STZ.



Source: Making Connections 2022 public consultation survey

- 45. Support for the STZ was higher among survey respondents living inside the proposed zone than outside of it.

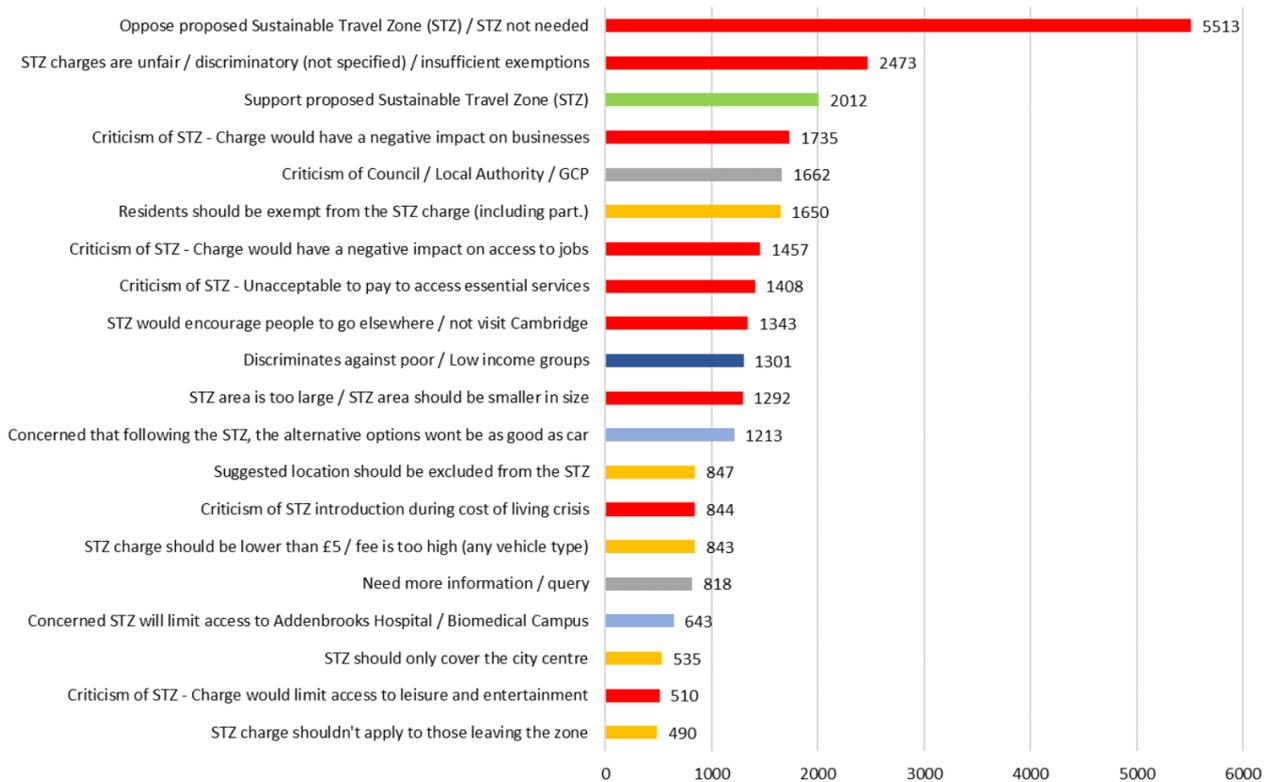
Support for STZ by location inside or outside STZ boundary in the consultation questionnaire



Source: Making Connections 2022 public consultation survey

46. The most commonly occurring comments on the STZ, other than general expressions of opposition or support, were a sense of unfairness or that exemptions don't go far enough; concerns about impact on business; the suggestion that zone residents should be exempt; concern about paying to access essential services (the hospital is frequently cited here) and the impact on access to jobs.

Do you have any comments on the proposal to introduce a STZ (n=16,126)



Source: Making Connections 2022 public consultation survey

47. A fuller discussion of results from across all of the various evidence collected during the consultation is in the consultation report.

Issues to be considered in next steps

48. The consultation flagged a number of issues that will need to be considered carefully for response in any next steps. There may be a number of different options for addressing many of these issues which will need to be assessed and considered. Some of the issues raised are in tension with one another and so responding to these issues would require balancing competing opinions. As well as those opposed, and strongly opposed, to the STZ proposal there were also those supportive, and strongly supportive.
49. There may be a need to consider how the STZ element of the scheme might be modified in order to allay clearly expressed concerns, whilst delivering as much of the proposed benefits, which were strongly supported, as possible.
50. Themes and concerns around the STZ that were prominent across the survey, stakeholder and small group responses were (non-exhaustively):
 - a) Whether Addenbrookes and other hospitals should be within the zone
 - b) Whether the proposed zone is too large e.g., should it cover only the city centre
 - c) Whether residents should qualify for a discount or exemption from paying the charge
 - d) Concern about the impact on businesses, especially small businesses and the self-employed reliant on goods vehicles
 - e) Whether the charge for cars and vans is too high, and whether motorbikes should be liable to pay
 - f) Whether the hours of operation are too long and should be peak(s) only
 - g) Concern about the impact on older people, those with mobility impairments or who find using public transport difficult and those on low incomes
 - h) Questions about how the discounts and exemptions were defined and how they would operate
 - i) Concern about the impact of the scheme on informal and unpaid carers
 - j) Whether electric vehicles should be exempt from the charge, or receive a discounted rate
 - k) Concerns about the difficulty of 'trip chaining' on public transport for example childcare drop-off on the way to work.
 - l) Whether alternative means of funding some or all the proposed improvements might be considered.

Options to address consultation concerns

51. There is a variety of changes that are possible to the consultation version of the scheme that could be assessed in terms of their ability to address the concerns raised above, as well as those covered in more detail in the consultation report.
52. These include options to:
 - Change the **core parameters of the scheme** (for example the hours, opening year, charge rate or boundary); and/or
 - Change the **rules about who is required to pay** and under what circumstances (for example amending or adding discounts, exemptions, reimbursements and user account benefits)
 - Changes to the benefits that the scheme delivers (for example **changing the bus or sustainable travel offer** to better target positive impacts of the scheme)

53. These changes are not mutually exclusive. They could be made individually or together in many different potential combinations. The implications of any one change would depend on which other measures it is combined with. For example, the revenue and traffic reduction implications of exempting all car travel to the hospital would vary depending on whether road charging hours were all day (as per the consultation), or whether they were changed (for example to peak hour charging only).
54. The section below therefore aims to give a sense of the relative impact of individual changes. The next step would be to identify one or more packages of potential changes that could be assessed and compared in more detail.

Potential changes to STZ parameters

55. Potential changes to scheme parameters that could be considered are set out below. All would require further technical assessment before a recommendation can be made. It would not be affordable, nor address the problem of congestion, if all of the changes below were made and decisions would therefore need to be taken about relative priority of changes. Future decisions will need to balance the need to respond to concerns about the STZ with widespread support for the improvements to public transport, walking and cycling the STZ is intended to achieve. This section sets out the broad (but non-exhaustive) scope of options to consider.
- a) **Reducing the hours of operation:** many respondents feel the proposed STZ charging hours do not allow for people to move around at times of lower congestion. Reducing the chargeable hours (potentially to morning peak only, or morning and evening peak) would focus the charge on the hours when congestion is currently most acute. The impact of the scheme on peak period traffic, especially the morning peak, would be slightly less than an all-day scheme and there would be a relative increase in traffic in the hours outside of the charge (i.e. peak spreading to other daytime hours). Bus journey times and reliability would improve during peak hours but there would be less income available to reinvest in public transport and other improvements.
 - b) There is also an option to **phase in the STZ over a longer period**. The consultation proposed beginning to gradually phase in the STZ by introducing peak hour charging ahead of all day charging over a period of two years. This phasing in period could be extended either for a fixed number of years, or by analysing whether or not traffic begins to rise to unsustainable levels during the inter-peak hours.
 - c) It would also be possible to make smaller tweaks to the hours of operation, such as **finishing the charge earlier**, say at 6pm rather than 7pm, to allow for more evening social, leisure, shopping and caring trips without charge.
 - d) **Reduced charge rates:** reducing the charge rate for all types of vehicles was raised as one of the issues that has the potential to change people's opposition to the zone. Organisational respondents for business flagged concerns about the impact of the charge on business costs, especially for smaller businesses and those reliant on commercial vehicles such as trades, haulage and logistics. This concern was particularly acute amongst haulage companies who feel that they have least (or often no) option to avoid the charge by changing mode. For cars, a key consideration would be whether a reduced charge would have a sufficient deterrent impact on car use, especially since inflation would continue to erode the real value of the charge by the time it is introduced. The principle of ensuring the bus is a more attractive financial option than car would be difficult to maintain with any reduction in the car charge.

Reducing or removing the charge on motorbikes was suggested by some to reflect the opinion that motorbikes contribute less to congestion than cars.

56. There are a small number of changes suggested by consultation feedback that would be more challenging to achieve. Further work would need to consider whether it is possible to reflect this feedback without jeopardising the ability to meet scheme objectives, deliver value for money or be operationally feasible.
- a) **Reduce the size of the zone to the city centre only** – the majority of the Local Plan committed growth sites are on the periphery of the city, near to the proposed boundary. **Defining a STZ zone that excludes these means that neither current nor future congestion issues would be addressed and so the scheme would not be able to deliver on its core objectives.** Any alternative smaller zone would need to be defined to ensure that cars have a safe opportunity to avoid the charge by taking an alternative route. Given the layout of the road network in the city the likely only alternative would be a charge that applied within (but not including) the inner ring road. **At present that area accounts for approximately 15% of traffic on the city network so a zone of that scale would not address the congestion problem and would likely cause substantial displacement and worsening of congestion on key other city routes such as Coldhams Lane.**
 - b) **Remove the Cambridge University Hospitals sites from the zone** – removing the hospitals from the STZ area would raise several practical and policy issues that may be insurmountable. **However, the possibility of exempting all hospital patients and their visitors as an alternative – a ‘virtual’ removal – could be explored further (see below).** The Cambridge Biomedical Campus on which the hospitals are located is a large traffic generator in the south of the city and on the wider road network, and the site of significant future job (and travel) growth. It is not likely to be possible to remove the hospitals from the zone boundary without also excluding the wider CBC and main approaching roads. Removing the CBC would therefore mean taking a large ‘wedge’ out of the proposed STZ with significant traffic implications for surrounding residential areas. Or, reverting to an inner ring road boundary as discussed above. Moreover, taking the CBC out of the zone would not fully address the consultation concern about paying to access the hospitals. Whilst it would mean that those living outside the zone (in Cambridgeshire and beyond) could drive to the hospitals without incurring a charge, residents of the zone (in the City of Cambridge) would still to pay to access the hospital, because their start point would be within the STZ. This inequality could be avoided by taking an alternative approach to addressing concerns by voiding the charge for all hospital patients and their visitors, based on ANPR records at hospital car parks, or by giving a number of free day passes to all account holders (see below for further discussion of options).
 - c) **Varying the charge by time of day** so that drivers pay less in the inter-peak period than during the peaks. Again, this would reduce income available to reinvest in alternatives to the car, compared to the consultation scheme, but would retain a deterrent to increased traffic in the inter-peak compared with a peak hour only charging regime. It would be more complex to administer and potentially for users to understand and that complexity may reduce public acceptability.

Potential changes to scheme rules

57. A broad set of proposals for discounts, exemptions and reimbursements (DERs) was set out in the consultation document and included proposals. If work to develop a STZ were

to progress, more detailed design of these would be required taking into account consultation feedback.

58. Concerns about the suite of DERs proposed was a common theme in the consultation, and respondents to the demographically representative polling raised changes to discounts, exemptions and reimbursements as a top issue that could bring them to change their mind about their opposition to the STZ.
59. Some key thematic issues that could be addressed in future work relating to DERs are set out in this section. It would not be affordable to do everything set out here at once so there would need to be decisions taken about relative prioritisation. The intention is to set out the broad (but non-exhaustive) scope of options.
 - **Free days for account holders:** Allocating a number of 'free' days of car travel to account holders, or a percentage discount on all days, to allow for the many individual circumstances people have raised in which they feel they have no option but to use a car but do not otherwise qualify for an exemption. This might include trips as diverse as taking an elderly parent to a medical appointment; evening leisure activities; carrying bulky parcels to the post office; visiting a DIY shop; volunteering at a food bank; taking a child across town for a sports club; teachers carrying books home for marking; or simply doing a big grocery shop. Giving account holders a budget of free (non-charged) days to use for various purposes as they see fit could achieve a level of flexibility to people's real-life circumstances and reflect a broader range of needs than can be defined through a series of specific individual exemptions¹². There would be options as to how many free days, whether they were all day or off peak, whether they should be entirely free or just discounted, and whether they should apply just to residents of the CPCA area, or to all account holders. There would also be choices about whether and how quickly they should taper off over time, as the scheme and the travel infrastructure improvements it enables ramp up. The principle could also be extended to business and charity accounts where, again, there would be potential to target the proportion of free days, for example based on size or location of business, or the nature of the charity. The cost and impact of this would be highly scalable depending how it was defined. Unless an explicit decision were taken to the contrary, this would be in addition to the suite of DERs proposed in the consultation, not instead.
 - **Exemptions for all hospital patients and their visitors:** as set out above, removing the hospital sites from the zone entirely is likely to be difficult but the hospital sites could potentially be 'virtually removed' from the zone by voiding the charge of anyone who parks at an authorised hospital carpark on a hospital-related journey. There would be a number of technical routes to deliver this which could be explored. The cost of this in terms of lost revenue would be relatively substantial, and the main drawback would be that as the hospitals are already a significant contributor to congestion, exempting trips would not improve congestion, particularly prevalent in that part of the city. The CUH incur significant cost associated with people missing appointments because they are stuck in traffic, so an exemption would offer no incentive to people to switch modes. This is a relatively costly change to the scheme which would primarily benefit those people visiting the hospital who (with the exception of those given free parking by the hospital) have already shown themselves willing and able to incur the high parking charges at the site.
 - **Low-income discount: the proposals as set out in the consultation already proposed a discount for those on a lower income** to be considered further on the

basis of consultation feedback. Many of the consultation responses to the survey and through stakeholder meetings or organisational responses nevertheless flagged the impact on those on lower incomes as a key concern. If the decision was taken to progress the STZ further work would consider how a low-income discount could be best designed, what the qualifying criteria would be and whether and how it could potentially build on or learn from existing schemes such as the NHS Healthcare Travel Costs scheme. This would incorporate feedback, suggestions and evidence from the consultation.

- **Exemptions for unpaid carers: The proposals set out in the consultation already recommended that registered care workers who spend their days going between multiple clients' homes would be exempt.** Through the consultation we heard concerns from those giving informal and/or unpaid care and whether the STZ charge would prevent or deter them supporting elderly relatives, friends or neighbours. We could consider whether it is possible to offer an additional discount or exemption. The challenge, which could be considered in a future stage, would be establishing how to define informal caring, reliably identifying those carers, and distinguishing between a 'caring trip' and when it is personal business (that would otherwise be chargeable). Eligibility for Carers Allowance would be one such option. Aiming for anything more bespoke may be prohibitively difficult to define, administer and enforce. This would need further careful consideration. An alternative approach might be to issue general account holder free days, but this may be insufficient for those with more frequent responsibilities. Additionally, or alternatively, if the hours of the charge were to be reduced then people who care for others would have more times during the day when they can do so by car without incurring a charge.
- **Charity volunteers:** the consultation already suggested that there would be an exemption for charity vehicles such as minibuses and vans used for trips, transport or deliveries. It would be possible to consider how a charity might also have some allowance for volunteers to use their personal vehicles to support the work of the charity. Again, future work would need to consider whether and how this could be defined, administered and enforced. This is likely to come at high administrative cost and may be difficult to define fairly. Additionally, or alternatively, if the hours of the charge were to be reduced then people who volunteer may move around during non-charging times.
- **Exemption for out-commuters near the boundary** – this has been raised as an issue in broader public discourse since the consultation, but was not a theme heard strongly in response to the public survey: out of a total of c.145,000 comments, c.1500 comments were received saying the STZ charge shouldn't apply to people leaving the zone. There are some who live towards the edge of the proposed zone and work outside of it who feel it unfair that they would be liable for a charge for driving a relatively short distance out of the zone in the opposite direction to peak hour traffic. The counter argument would be that all vehicles on the road contribute to traffic in and around the strategic road network and the key junctions such as Milton Interchange or the M11 and A14 junctions on which all car trips take up capacity irrespective of direction. Just as investment in public transport services and infrastructure would give those commuting into the zone a viable alternative for out-commuting, those services would run in two directions, and it would also be easier to commute out of the zone for work with greater investment proposed by the scheme. Further work would consider this in more detail, but it is likely to be challenging to define an exemption or discount for out-commuters that is fair and enforceable without being administratively costly and complex.

60. For any potential changes to the proposals, the next step would be to carry out an assessment of potential impacts in terms of
- the extent to which they addresses consultation feedback
 - overall scheme objectives (traffic reduction; improvements to public transport; improvements to walking, cycling and wheeling etc)
 - impact on complexity and enforceability
 - impact on costs and revenues
 - equalities, social and distributional impacts
 - deliverability.

Phasing

61. Almost any of the changes discussed above could be made on a phased basis to provide a scheme that begins smaller (physical size, lower charge etc.) and ramps up over a longer period of time.

Potential changes to the proposed bus or sustainable travel package

62. Any changes to the STZ proposals to reflect public concern would affect the extent to which the bus and sustainable travel packages set out in the consultation can be delivered. Future technical work would need to consider what should be prioritised including potential changes to the composition or nature of the benefits delivered and outcomes achieved. It may be necessary to make difficult choices in prioritising spend between providing new bus services, subsidising bus fares and investing in other sustainable travel investment if significant reductions were made to the scope of the STZ. In some cases, there may be scope to address concerns about the impact of the STZ through other means rather than making changes to the STZ proposals themselves. These would be explored in any future detailed work.
63. Any such changes would need to be made in light of the consultation feedback gathered about the bus and sustainable travel proposals in terms of what people most value about the proposals.
64. Reductions in the scope of the STZ would not only affect the ability to improve buses and sustainable travel in financial terms. Equally as important is the projected impact of the STZ on reducing traffic volumes which was the proposed means of delivering faster and more reliable bus services, and a safer and more attractive environment for walking and cycling. Without a substantial reduction in traffic delays, it will be difficult to deliver the improved journey speeds and reliability that consultation responses tell us is a high priority.

Other potential supporting changes

65. Where there are concerns raised through the consultation around issues such as nuisance parking at the boundary of the STZ, these may be better dealt with through adjacent policy such as reviewing parking restrictions than changes to the zone itself. These would be dealt with at a future level of detail.

Equalities considerations

66. In addition to the most frequently occurring comments it is important to give due consideration to comments that may occur less frequently but relate to issues of equalities, particularly in relation to legally protected characteristics.
67. A draft Equalities Impact Assessment was prepared in advance of the consultation and formed part of the package of materials online for scrutiny, and the consultation itself was designed as an important means of gathering further evidence about equalities impacts.
68. More detailed analysis will need to be undertaken but when asked if the proposals would positively or negatively impact people with protected characteristics respondents were most concerned about how the proposals would impact on the elderly, with 1526 comments being made. Other protected characteristics respondents thought would be negatively impacted were the mobility impaired (1242) and low-income groups (1132). Parents (558), young people (440), people with hidden disabilities (409), carers (257), and women (244) were also identified, though they were mentioned less often.
69. Respondents also used this section to state that the exemptions didn't go far enough (1486). While not directly linked to a protected characteristic, 227 respondents commented that they thought the STZ would isolate or restrict them. This theme did not feature prominently in any feedback throughout the consultation questionnaire.
70. A more detailed consideration of potential equalities impacts, both positive and negative and how to address them, would be included in any further work to develop proposals.