

AGENDA ITEM NO 11

Notes of a remote meeting of the East Cambs Bus, Cycle, Walk Working Party held on Wednesday 10th November at 6.00pm.

PRESENT

Cllr Alan Sharp (Chairman)
Cllr David Ambrose Smith
Cllr Charlotte Cane
Cllr Lorna Dupré
Cllr Mark Goldsack
Cllr Simon Harries

OFFICERS

Sally Bonnett – Infrastructure & Strategy Manager
Caroline Evans – Democratic Services Officer

67. APOLOGIES

The Chairman welcomed Cllr Goldsack to the group as a permanent Member, replacing Cllr Lis Every.

Cllr Dupré stated that Cllr Harries would be joining the meeting late.

68. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

69. NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Notes of the meeting held on 24th June 2021 were agreed as an accurate record.

70. REVISED TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Working Party received the revised Terms of Reference, previously circulated, which had been approved by the Finance & Assets Committee on 22nd July 2021.

A Member observed that the reference in 2.4 to the Combined Authority's "Local Transport Plan Refresh Consultation" should technically be amended to refer to the "Local Transport and Connectivity Plan Consultation" but there was general agreement that this was not formally necessary.

71. DRAFT ECDC CONSULTATION RESPONSE TO THE CPCA LOCAL TRANSPORT AND CONNECTIVITY PLAN CONSULTATION

The Working Party received a draft version, previously circulated, of the Council's proposed response to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Local Transport and Connectivity Plan Consultation. The Infrastructure & Strategy Manager explained that the Combined Authority's Local Transport Plan had been renamed to include connectivity in recognition of the importance of digital improvements which could, in many cases, be a substitute for physical journeys.

The Council's draft response had included various projects that the Council wanted to deliver throughout the District. The intention was to make any necessary changes to the document following the meeting, then send it to all Members for comment before making final amendments and submitting the response to the Combined Authority by their 28th November deadline. The public consultation on the draft Local Transport and Connectivity Plan would commence in early 2022. The Officer also highlighted that the County Council had an open Active Travel Consultation for Soham, and the Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) had launched two consultations in the last week.

A Member commented, and other Members agreed, that it was problematic that East Cambs was not part of the GCP. They were currently proposing changes to the eastern access to Cambridge that would affect residents of the District. Lack of ECDC representation on GCP meant there was a reliance on the Combined Authority and the County Council to promote the District's issues, not just with respect to the eastern access.

6:06pm Cllr Simon Harries joined the meeting.

The Chairman reminded Members that much of the background to the document was outside the remit of the Working Party whose focus had been on buses, cycling and walking. Nonetheless, discussion would be helpful prior to the document being circulated to all Members.

Members made the following observations and suggested amendments:

- There were political differences regarding support of the detailed content of the document.
- Page 2, paragraph 4 – the balance between subsidised bus fares and subsidised routes should be clearly articulated. Although rural routes were very important, subsidising some groups could result in “quick wins” taking substantial amounts of traffic off the roads. For example, facilitating young people to access The Hive Leisure Centre or jobs/training would be beneficial.
- Although the report contained a section regarding A14/A142 junctions 37 and 38, a more specific reference should be made regarding the impact of tailbacks along the A142 in East Cambs, and that rat-runs were created through the nearby villages in order to avoid congestion and delays at the junctions.

- Electric vehicles were already established on the roads whereas the future of hydrogen-fuelled vehicles was more uncertain. The document should reflect that and the importance of electric charging points should be stressed.
- A stronger paragraph should be included regarding connectivity. As a rural District this was an important issue since remote working was not possible in some areas due to poor connectivity and/or poor mobile phone reception.

The Infrastructure & Strategy Manager explained that she would submit the response on behalf of the Council but all Members could additionally submit individual or group responses if they wished.

It was agreed that:

- The Infrastructure & Strategy Manager would send the document to all Members for comment prior to submission of the Council's response.

72. DRAFT EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE CYCLING AND WALKING ROUTES STRATEGY

The Working Party received a report (W96, previously circulated) requesting approval of the draft East Cambridgeshire Cycling and Walking Routes Strategy and its subsequent recommendation to Finance & Assets Committee for approval. The Infrastructure & Strategy Manager explained that it had been designed by the Reprographics team to complement the Working Party's previously-published Bus Prospectus, and a website version would also be produced in order to make the maps more accessible.

In response to Members' questions the Officer explained that:

- the previously-agreed Sustrans studies were underway with the analysis of the Reach-Burwell-Swaffham route due to be completed at the end of the year, Littleport-Ely at the end of January 2022, and the remainder at the end of June 2022. Sustrans were also updating the costs for the Soham to Wicken cycle route. As part of the process, Sustrans talked to stakeholders regarding aspects such as utilities and ground conditions but she was unsure whether communities could be involved at this stage; she committed to finding out and feeding back to Members.
- The Department for Transport was very prescriptive regarding the contents of the LCWIP. The County Council's Active Travel would consider elements that would not be included, including equestrians.
- The routes indicated on page 9 of the document were purely indicative and Sustrans would investigate the best route in each instance.

Members made the following observations:

- Cycle routes should be segregated from the road traffic in order for all users to have confidence in their safety. The positioning and landscaping of the routes should also be carefully considered so that

users would not feel vulnerable, for example by giving a sense of isolation.

- Footpath/cycle path design should also consider safety aspects related to their use by users of e-bikes, e-scooters and mobility scooters in addition to pedestrians and cyclists.
- A vast amount of data had been condensed into a usable and positive strategy.
- There had been some misunderstandings throughout by the public and Parish Councils as to what constituted a “footpath”, in particular whether pavements should be included.

Members suggested the following revisions:

- Page 1 – it should be made clearer that equestrian travel had not been included.
- Page 1 – the final sentence was defeatist and should be altered.
- Page 3, paragraph 2 – “food shopping” should be amended to “shopping”.
- Page 9 – it should be clear that the priority routes were indicative only. (For example, the Soham to Ely route should follow the river *via* Barway rather than the A142.)
- Page 12 – e-scooters should be added to the new forms of active travel.

It was agreed:

- That the Infrastructure & Strategy Manager would amend the document in light of the debate and then re-circulate to Working Party Members for final comments to be received by Monday 15th November.
- Following revisions as above, **to RECOMMEND TO FINANCE & ASSETS COMMITTEE:**
That the draft East Cambridgeshire Cycling and Walking Routes Strategy be approved.

73. CYCLE PATH AND FOOTPATH CONDITION FEEDBACK REPORT

The Working Party received a report (W97, previously circulated) detailing the responses received from Parish Councils regarding routes that had been identified in the 2020 consultation as being in disrepair or having street clutter or insufficient lighting. The Infrastructure & Strategy Manager explained that 15 Parish Councils had responded and their comments had been added to the information already provided in response to the consultation. All of the information was listed in Appendix 1 of the report. The proposal was to send the Appendix to the County Council’s Highways Team with the request that they address the outstanding issues highlighted in the document.

There was general agreement that more clarity was required for some of the routes, and that local knowledge would enable some entries to be grouped together since essentially the same route may have been described slightly differently by different respondents, thereby generating unnecessary multiple

entries. It was considered that a more concise document with more specific locations and descriptions would increase the likelihood of successful action. Ward Members and Parish Councils could work together where further information was needed and it was agreed that the responses received from Littleport Parish Council gave the level of detail required.

It was agreed that:

- The Infrastructure & Strategy Manager would send to the County Council all entries that contained sufficient detail for the Highways Team to action.
- The Infrastructure & Strategy Manager would send all remaining entries to all Members asking them to raise the issue with the relevant Parish Council(s) in their Ward, and include examples from Littleport to illustrate what was required. Any further, suitably detailed, responses would then be sent to the County Council, as above, without further consultation with the Working Party.

74. WORK PROGRAMME – NOVEMBER 2021

Members received and noted the Work Programme to January 2022.

There was general discussion about revisiting the bus provision once the immediate actions relating to cycling and walking had been completed in the coming months. The following points were made by Members:

- The Combined Authority's Bus Service Improvement Plan had recently been published on their website. The Overview & Scrutiny Committee had not seen it prior to publication. The Working Party should reconsider buses in light of the contents of the publication
- With the imminent opening of the new train station in Soham, private and public buses were needed to enable young people to access the trains, for example to travel to sixth form colleges in Cambridge and Bury St Edmunds. Facilitating node-to-node travel was essential.
- The "dial-a-ride" concept from previous discussions remained of interest. A demand-responsive trial in Huntingdonshire was underway called "Ting". West Hunts had been chosen for the trial but a Member was keen that East Cambs should undertake a second trial.
- Quality multi-person transportation schemes were important.

7:30pm Cllrs Dupré, Goldsack and Harries left the meeting and did not return due to other commitments.

The next stage of the LTCP consultation would commence in January 2022 and the final publication was due in March 2022.

75. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Chairman proposed, to general agreement, that the next meeting be held in January or February 2022, the timing to be arranged according to the LTCP consultation timeframe.

The meeting closed at 7:33pm.

DRAFT