

**CAMCYCLE**



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## **Making Connections 2022 consultation response**

Camcycle is a volunteer-led charity with over 1,650 members working for more, better and safer cycling for all ages and abilities. We work with partners across the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough region with a focus on cycling as a mode of sustainable transport for everyday trips such as accessing work or school, shopping, attending medical appointments, visiting friends and family, and leisure.

**We have consulted with our members to compile this response and although there is a wide range of views within our membership, overall we support the key principles of the Making Connections proposals. The introduction of road charging, funding public transport, investing in walking and cycling and reducing traffic levels is vital, however the details of the proposals need to be adjusted and refined to ensure they meet the needs of the communities they intend to serve.**

### **The need for traffic reduction**

Without policy intervention, the number of daily journeys in the region is projected to increase by around 20% by 2031. This has implications for health, air quality, emissions, and congestion. The combined authority and its constituent councils signed up to the recommendations outlined in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Independent Commission on Climate's report, which included a commitment to reduce car mileage by 15%, using a 2019 baseline across the region. To put the scale of this target into perspective, we have calculated this as equal to 732 million miles of car mileage (including taxis). The Greater Cambridge Partnership also has its own targets to reduce motor vehicle trips within the city, initially 10-15% on 2011 levels, equivalent to 25% or more on current trip levels.

**Camcycle believes that the Sustainable Travel Zone could free up road space by the predicted 50% reduction and provide funding that could be transformative for cycling in and around the city, improving safety for those who already cycle and enabling more people to start and continue cycling.**

### **Transforming transport in and around Cambridge**

A majority of residents would like to see more investment in public transport and active travel, but our region isn't getting enough money to deliver the high-quality routes we need. The Greater Cambridge Partnership's scheme could unlock consistent funding which can then be used to provide better routes, both within the city and across the whole county. However, progressing with the Making Connections proposal would require many people to make significant changes to their travel choices and behaviour.

For some, it would bring additional costs, and for others a certain amount of inconvenience. However, if the proposals are developed in the right way and supported by clear communications, the scheme should provide everyone with better sustainable transport options, improve journey times as a whole and reduce existing transport costs. At a city level, a Sustainable Travel Zone would reduce air pollution, increase liveability, improve public space, and reduce congestion. Across the region, it would improve connectivity, reduce social isolation and provide funding opportunities for future infrastructure that supports walking, cycling and public transport. At a national level, it would establish Cambridgeshire as a region that sets the agenda and one that is willing to take bold action to meet its climate commitments.

**In short, we believe the proposals would help to create a thriving region of opportunity and inclusion, where people can travel safely, easily and affordably.**

## **The way forward**

As proposed, the business case delays funding for walking and cycling during the initial years of operation, and this is not acceptable. We believe that 20% of the charging revenue should be ring-fenced specifically for walking and cycling improvements. A package of works should be brought forward prior to the STZ implementation that consists of walking and cycling quick wins. We believe it is vital that work on the road network hierarchy takes place at the same time as the STZ measures to create safe, attractive routes for people walking and cycling and free up road space for new bus services. Other measures including a detailed behavioural change programme, safer junctions, School Streets, secure cycle parking, bridge improvements and signal prioritisation should be delivered rapidly over the next few years.

We also note that there is an existing lack of trust among local residents around how their comments in the consultation will be responded to and how quickly and effectively improvements would be delivered. We hope that the GCP will work closely with stakeholder groups and the wider community to develop the Sustainable Travel Zone proposals further and we urge them to maintain a constant dialogue on progress.

We are not convinced that the GCP fully realises the high return on investment that active travel can deliver, especially if fully funded. Active travel is highly flexible, non-polluting, and has a low impact on travel infrastructure. We would welcome a shift in the GCP's approach that indicates recognition of the advantages of active travel. Cambridge should aspire to become the most pedestrian and cycle-friendly city in the world.

**Local people already hold many of the best ideas for improving walking, cycling, and public transport around the region and the GCP must listen to these voices to ensure the best outcomes.**

Our detailed response follows.

**Question 1:** To what extent do you support or oppose the proposals for bus improvements and fare reductions?

**Camcycle strongly support**

We should be doing everything we can to encourage more people to choose more sustainable forms of transport like buses and therefore reduce the number of car journeys in our city. To achieve the scale of change required there must be reliable, accessible, and cheap alternatives.

**Question 2:** Do you have any comments on the proposals for:

- Cheaper fares?
- More routes?
- Fast, high frequency services?
- Longer operating hours?
- Increased rural services?
- Simpler ticketing?
- Zero emission bus services?

**Cheaper fares:** Clear information should be presented on the fare caps, weekly, monthly and annual tickets plus ticketing for children, students and families. Some of the necklace villages just on the border of the STZ would also benefit from further fare reduction, say £1.50 singles to act as an intermediate.

**More routes:** More routes are welcome, but these should be designed to minimise conflict between pedestrians, cyclists and buses. For example, more detail is needed on interchanges in the city centre. There should be a combination of express services with a limited number of stops, together with local services that provide stop frequency to villages.

**Fast, high frequency services:** There must be accurate real-time information at all bus stops and online, plus next stop information onboard. A high frequency inner-city orbital bus service should be provided to help with mobility within the city and remove the need for all services to enter the city centre.

**Longer operating hours:** Further information should be provided regarding the peak operating hours and how these change for rural & urban areas.

**Increased rural services:** Many of the rural routes are proposed as hourly services. These would benefit significantly from increased peak-hour services but will see little demand for services at 1 am and 5 am. Greater flexibility in the bus network and engagement with local communities can ensure the bus services are aligned with the needs of individual communities.

**Simpler ticketing:** A proof of payment system should be considered rather than requiring all passengers to tap in on the bus. This dramatically improves loading and unloading times. Buses with multiple doors will enable more efficient boarding and alighting.

**Question 3:** Are there any additional improvements to bus services that would be needed for you to use bus services for more of your journeys? If so, what are they? Or if you are a non-bus user, what would encourage you to use the bus?

**Demand responsive transport:** Further details must be provided on demand-responsive transport (DRT) and smaller shuttle buses.

**Shuttle buses:** smaller shuttle buses will help people with reduced mobility move within the city and remove the need for all services to enter the city core. Cambridge Biomedical Campus already runs a successful shuttle service; this type of service should be expanded to other parts of the city such as the city centre, CB1 and Cambridge North.

**Bike friendly services and active travel integration:** At a minimum there must be consistent and fair access for people to take folding bikes on all buses. Disabled cyclists should also be able to bring their cycle onboard if it serves as a mobility aid. Bike friendly buses are now used in Yorkshire, Hull and in the Scottish Borders and have been tremendously successful. Bike friendly services should be at least considered on long-distance routes, subject to further and evolving consideration of numbers of bikes, and peak time restrictions. Travel passes could also be designed to be used on buses and shared bikes/scooters.

**Connections to transport hubs:** There must be walking and cycling routes connecting to transport hubs and local bus stops, along with cycle parking wherever possible at bus stops.

**Bus specification:** A future bus specification should be drawn up: this could include provision for cycles, flexible space to allow people to travel with pushchairs, mobility aids, wheelchairs, suitcases and shopping and with two doors for reduced loading/unloading times. New buses should also meet the Bus Safety Standard which has been developed by TfL to improve bus safety.

**Through routing services:** Increased service frequencies will put a significant strain on the limited city centre bus infrastructure and road space. To minimise this pressure, and reduce the need to change buses, through routes that avoid terminating in the city centre should be promoted wherever possible, such as re-linking routes 7 and 8. Other direct routes to key destinations (eg Addenbrooke's/Biomedical Campus) avoiding the city centre should be introduced to reduce congestion in the city centre. Where changes are required, these should not result in an additional ticket needing to be purchased.

**Orbital Routes:** Bus routes that connect key destinations away from the city centre will be a necessary part of a functioning public transport network and will improve journey times and reduce the need for passengers to change services.

**Route Planning:** Access to high-quality route planning will be vital. Collaboration with companies such as Citymapper would be hugely beneficial in helping people understand and plan their journeys, particularly when undertaking multimodal trips.

**Real-time information:** Current and accurate route, timetable and real-time information should be displayed at all stops.

**Question 4:** The bus improvements are proposed to start immediately after a decision in summer 2023 and ramp up over the following 4-5 years. What bus improvements would you want to see delivered first? (select up to 3)

**1. Fast, high-frequency services:** Research shows that high-frequency services are the most important feature for attracting passengers.

**2. Increased rural services:** The recent proposals to reduce bus routes to rural communities have angered many and shown how fragile the existing bus network is. Connecting these communities quickly will bring many in these communities back on side and encourage confidence in the bus service.

**3. Cheaper Fares:** An important step during a cost-of-living crisis that will prompt a modal shift.

**Question 5:** To what extent would you support or oppose the franchising of the local bus network by the Mayor and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority?

**Camcycle strongly support**

We believe the bus improvements should be delivered through bus franchising and this should be in place prior to the full implementation of the Sustainable Travel Zone road charge. Franchising would give the transport authority control over routes, times and frequency of operation, bus specification, and permit cross-subsidy from profitable routes to support routes that are not financially self-sustaining.

**Question 6 asks:** To what extent do you support or oppose additional improvements to walking and cycling, accessibility and public spaces?

Camcycle believes all of the additional improvements are **very important**.

We are not convinced that the GCP fully realises the high return on investment that active travel can deliver, especially if fully funded. Active travel is highly flexible, non-polluting, and has a low impact on travel infrastructure. We would welcome a shift in the GCP's approach that indicates recognition of the advantages of active travel. Cambridge should aspire to become the most pedestrian and cycle-friendly city in the world.

The proposals will result in thousands of additional journeys every day on the pavements and cycle routes in and around the city. Urgent action is required across the city to make these journeys safe, as well as longer-term strategies to ensure the number of people walking and cycling continues to increase.

Many of the existing walking and cycling routes across Cambridgeshire are in a poor condition or already at capacity. As proposed, the business case delays funding for walking and cycling during the initial years of operation and this is not acceptable. We believe that 20% of the charging revenue should be ring-fenced specifically for walking and cycling improvements.

**Question 7 asks:** If a Sustainable Travel Zone was introduced, are there any other improvements you would like to see funded?

**Integration with the network hierarchy:** It is vital that work on the road network hierarchy takes place at the same time as the STZ measures to create safe, attractive routes for people walking and cycling and free up road space for new bus services. The first modal filters should begin to be implemented in 2023, with the full network in place at the same time as the road charge. Traffic-calmed streets and low-traffic neighbourhoods would rapidly deliver benefits for health, safety, air quality and liveability and having the hierarchy in place at the same time as the road charge would greatly reduce the complexity of monitoring the Sustainable Travel Zone.

**Safer junctions:** The majority of collisions and incidents occur at junctions and many of the existing junctions within Cambridge are unsafe. A priority list of junction improvements should be scoped, designed and implemented.

**Quick wins for walking and cycling:** A package of works should be brought forward prior to the STZ implementation that consists of walking and cycling quick wins. These works will close existing gaps in the network and remove existing barriers to walking and cycling.

**Increasing capacity and improving the existing network:** Many of the existing walking and cycling routes across Cambridgeshire are in a poor condition or already at capacity.

**Reprioritising signals:** All of the existing traffic signal timings within the city should be reviewed as traffic is reduced to ensure that active travel is prioritized at junctions.

**Bridge improvements:** A number of bridge crossings should be improved to mitigate for increased numbers of walking and cycling journeys: Sheep's Green Bridge, Magdalene Bridge, Jesus Lock Footbridge, Jane Coston Bridge, Fort St George Bridge, Cutter Ferry Bridge, Green Dragon Bridge and Coldham's Lane Bridge.

**School streets:** The roll-out of school streets across the region is vital and the county council must be bold in taking steps to keep children safe when they are travelling to school. This will help parents to avoid the need to drive their children to school and pay the road charge.

**Non-residential cycle parking:** Cycle parking at travel hubs, train stations, bus stations and bus stops must be improved in quantity, quality, accessibility, and security.

**Residential Cycle Parking:** If more people are to cycle then the amount of secure cycle parking on our streets must be increased, especially for larger, adapted bikes that support businesses, family life and accessibility. A residential cycle parking scheme should be implemented across the region.

**Supporting behaviour change:** Further support is required to encourage people to make sustainable travel choices: a package that considers travel planning, route planners, cycle training, cycle loans, cycle trade-ins, accessible cycles and education should be brought forward.

**Last mile connections:** There must be improvements to walking and cycling access to travel hubs, train stations, bus stations and bus stops.

**Station improvements:** An eastern access to Cambridge Station should be brought forward as more people continue to utilise rail travel.

**Maintenance:** The STZ should provide funding to support the maintenance of the walking, cycling and vehicular network across the region. This would help to fix potholes, manage seasonal clearance and improve the overall condition of the network.

**Question 8:** Do you have any comments on the proposal to introduce a Sustainable Travel Zone?

Camcycle broadly welcomes the introduction of a Sustainable Travel Zone.

Reducing the use of cars and reallocating space and priority to walking and cycling helps to solve urban and environmental issues and creates safe, healthy and attractive places for people to live, work and visit. The Sustainable Travel Zone proposals could transform the way people get around the

city to create more sustainable travel options and better conditions for people cycling and walking. A recent report for the international partnership for active travel and health states that enabling a significant share of urban trips to be walkable and cyclable will provide a quick, affordable and reliable way to significantly reducing transport emissions, traffic congestion and road casualties and at the same time deliver better public health, stronger economies and fairer societies. The GCP, the county council and the combined authority must work together and be bold if the STZ is to be a success.

Car journeys impose external costs on society, amounting to a public subsidy. Particulate and other emissions impact on public health (with poor air quality amplified in cities) whilst traffic congestion negatively affects on bus travel.

The ever-present risk of road traffic collisions, together with the disproportionate allocation of road space, discourages walking and cycling. A road charge can redress this imbalance and help fund walking, cycling and public transport. These modes generate societal benefits of reduced congestion, improved air quality, and increased mobility for people of all ages and abilities, especially those too young or unable to drive a car.

A high-quality walking cycling, and public transport network must be in place prior to the scheme being implemented. For example, schemes such as the Greenways and Chisholm Trail Phase 2 must be completed. Modal filters that create quiet streets and safe cycle routes must continue to be rolled out and a package of works to remove barriers in the existing walking and cycling network must be developed.

We believe that road charging must be accompanied by other ambitious policies, such as a workplace parking levy.

**Question 9:** To what extent do you support or oppose the introduction of a Sustainable Travel Zone to fund improvements to bus services, walking and cycling?

**Camcycle strongly supports**

Research carried out at the Lund University Centre for Sustainability Studies and published in Case Studies on Transport Policy identified that in order to improve health outcomes, meet climate targets and create more liveable cities, reducing car use should be an urgent priority. Their research ranked the 12 best ways to reduce car use in cities by screening over 800 peer-reviewed reports. It identified road charging where revenue goes to sustainable transport as the most effective strategy.

We believe that a road charge is, therefore, a necessity to reduce traffic and allow more people to travel sustainably. We believe that road charging must be accompanied by other ambitious policies.

**Question 10:** If you do not support the introduction of a Sustainable Travel Zone to fund improvements to bus services, walking and cycling, what alternative funding proposals would you propose to tackle the challenges faced by Greater Cambridge?

We support the introduction of a Sustainable Travel Zone. We also believe that other policies, such as a workplace parking levy, can contribute to funding improvements to walking, cycling and buses.

**Question 11:** Do you have any feedback on the proposed zone and its boundary?

We are broadly happy with the proposed zone and its boundary as it works effectively with the existing Park & Rides.

Necklace villages just outside the zone should be monitored to ensure that traffic volumes fall as predicted. Funding should be available to mitigate any impacts of drivers parking within these villages in order to use public transport.

We have had many conversations around the inclusion of Addenbrooke's within the zone and know that it is an emotive topic for many people. We are aware that the growth aspirations for the Cambridge Biomedical Campus (CBC), in which Addenbrooke's is situated, are significant. It would be unfair that CBC employees could freely contribute to congestion. Therefore, on balance, we think the proposed exemption arrangement is a reasonable approach. However, we also think that a workplace parking levy for the CBC would result in a similar amount of traffic reduction and would reduce the administrative burden of actioning exemptions and reimbursements for Addenbrooke's.

A smaller zone is possible. We believe it would have to be focused around the inner ring road and drivers would have to incur a higher charge. This proposal would have to be supported by a workplace parking levy, to ensure that any edge-of-city employees who currently contribute to congestion are still encouraged to take sustainable travel choices along with contributing to funding sustainable travel.

**Question 12:** Do you have any comments on the proposed hours of operation of the Sustainable Travel Zone?

Camcycle believes the weekday charge is fair but thinks an alternative weekend strategy may be required.

**Weekend congestion:** The level of congestion in Cambridge at the weekend is still high and this will only increase as many people will shift certain trips. The removal of the charge over the weekend will likely be of value to only a subset of the population, such as those working typical office hours. To tackle congestion over the weekend, a range of actions should be considered such as free fares on weekends or a congestion charge across the entire week but with revised exemptions for residents and businesses.

**Question 13:** To what extent would you support or oppose the principle of phasing in the Sustainable Travel Zone charge?

**Camcycle opposes**

A phased approach, with peak-time charging, will result in people adjusting when they travel, and would mask any reduction in congestion. It would also affect the quality of the bus service during the years in which the reduced charge time is active. This could be detrimental to the success of the STZ because it will be the time of the greatest opportunity to change people's behaviour, so the quality of the service will be vital.



As we discuss further below, we believe there should be no road charge until key walking and cycling improvements have been completed and the bus network has met a number of key performance indicators.

**Question 14:** Do you have any comments on the suggested phasing approach?

Time and again during our work to promote the Making Connections consultation, people we have talked to have expressed a lack of trust in both the GCP and in organisations such as Stagecoach. Therefore, the intention of the GCP to ramp up the bus network prior to the full implementation of the STZ is absolutely necessary. However, we feel a further commitment is required to assure people that no road charging shall be implemented until key walking and cycling improvements have been completed and the bus network is operating as promised. Therefore, we suggest a number of key performance indicators are established (for example, the number of bus drivers recruited) and that a minimum requirement is identified and met prior to the implementation of the STZ.

**Question 15:** Do you have any comments on the proposed charge levels?

We think that £5 is a fair charge that adequately reflects the social impacts of driving and would help to change travel behaviours.

The price should be regularly reviewed to adjust for inflation or to achieve the desired vehicular reduction.

It is likely that the government will announce legislation around e-scooters and other micromobility devices prior to the proposed implementation of the STZ. This may result in a new category that needs to be considered. Broadly speaking, micromobility devices with power assistance that is capped at 25 km/h or less should be excluded from the charge.

**Question 16:** Do you have any comments on the proposed discounts, exemptions, and reimbursements?

We believe the proposed discounts, exemptions and reimbursements are generally well considered and therefore have no specific comments.

**Question 17:** Do you have any other comments on the proposed discounts, exemptions and reimbursements?

For many, the Making Connections proposals offer multiple options to complete a journey. However, a number of existing residents who travel out of the city by car for either work or leisure will be left with little choice but to pay the charge if their destination is not served well by public transport. Additional options should be explored which could reduce the impact of the proposals on these residents.

Short-term and medium-term exemptions could be assigned to those with temporary health or social care needs and who are assessed as currently unfit to travel on public transport.

**Question 18:** Taking into account the improvements suggested above, are there any changes to the proposals or additional measures that would help enhance or address impacts on you / your business / your organisation and the way you travel?

We believe the proposals have been presented in a very static and seemingly inflexible way, causing many people to view this as a simple yes or no question. Instead, the conversation should have been, and must be going forward, what solutions do we want to solve the issues that are present in the region.

We appreciate that during previous engagement exercises, such as the Making Connections, Choices for Better Journeys consultations and the 2019 Citizens' Assembly, many important conversations were had. Yet it must also be noted that many people were not involved in these conversations, the concepts and policies were abstract and the timeline distant.

In the responses to Choices for Better Journeys, we saw good levels of support for traffic restrictions, road charging, and a workplace parking levy. In these proposals and the road hierarchy work, we can see an ambitious road-charging plan, no workplace parking levy and an unambitious hierarchy plan that is still car-centric. We believe a better balance can be struck between these and other policy interventions: one in which residents, big business, and small business all benefit and pay fairly.

There is widespread concern over the deliverability of and political support for these proposals. If significant changes are required to ensure these concerns are managed and mitigated, we urge the GCP to work with stakeholders to develop these. That means more than listening to consultation responses. We believe that a large working group could guide the GCP in this process, and that multiple options that achieve the same objectives could then be consulted on. This would ensure the conversation is focused around what proposal is best for the region and not around action vs inaction. The issues our region faces are too big to continue with the status quo.

**Question 19:** Please comment if you feel any of the proposals would either positively or negatively affect or impact on any such person/s or group/s.

We believe the proposals would increase equity of access to transport. Improving alternatives to driving would increase choice for everyone, with a particular benefit for those who do not drive or have access to a car.

The predicted reduction in car traffic would provide more space for walking and cycling. This would make it easier for people who use mobility scooters, wheelchairs, or other aids to move around. It would enable more children to move around independently using better pavements and cycleways. It would also allow significant improvements in the public realm, for example, providing space for benches to allow people with mobility issues to sit down and rest periodically along their journey. With less congestion, those with protected characteristics who need to use cars would have quicker, more reliable journeys. We support necessary exemptions from charging to improve equality of access to transport.

The proposals would increase equity. Improving alternatives to driving would rebalance the system in favour of those who cannot afford to drive or cannot drive, for whatever reason.