



<b>Combined Authority Board</b>		Agenda Item
<b>20 March 2024</b>		<b>5</b>
Title:	Public and Member Questions	
Public Report:	Yes	

**Question 1 – from Helen Boothman, Trustee of the Great Ouse Valley Trust**

To	CA Board
	Will the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority support the application for the Great Ouse Valley (in Cambridgeshire) and Washes to be designated as a new National Landscape?
	<p><i>Response</i></p> <p><i>One of the four Mayoral ambitions is to create a ‘strong sense of the place’ for our region. The Combined Authority has a corporate objective to enable resilient communities that are adaptable to the environmental, climate, financial and social crises. Another mayoral pledge is to ‘promote, protect and grow our unique Fens’. Critical to this is recognising the value of our unique landscape.</i></p> <p><i>The Combined Authority has set a target of doubling the amount of area managed for wildlife. Through the development of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, the Combined Authority is mapping opportunity areas for nature recovery – both habitats and species. We will feed any work on the Great Ouse Valley and Washes into the development of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, which will be consulted on later this year.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>National landscape designation is new terminology to replace AONB (changed in Nov 23), while retaining the same planning status as AONBs.</i></li><li><i>The proposal from the Trust is welcomed and the CPCA is committed to working with the Trust to shape and further joint ambitions for the Great Ouse and Washes area.</i></li></ul> <p><i>CPCA can support these proposals in line with our priorities but will need to be supported by the District and County Council and Natural England. We look forward to talking to you further about these proposals. We suggest that the proposal is raised with Environment and Sustainable Communities Committee at its next meeting, either as part of the LNRS or separately.</i></p>

**Question 2 – from Paul Hollinghurst, Cambridgeshire Resident**

To	CA Board
	<p>The Bus Reform and Network Delivery Update includes a report summary table of services being assessed from the precept suggestion list. This list doesn't include any improvements to the service between Cambourne and St Neots where the existing CPCA tendered service, whist very welcome, is infrequent and often doesn't serve the east of St Neots, so missing the railway station, and major Love's Farm and Wintringham developments from mid-afternoon onwards.</p> <p>Is there potential for the Cambourne to St Neots link to be added to the assessment list? Its absence seems peculiar given the growing demand as Cambourne expands, appearing in a local authority plan as a "key bus corridor" and in the past being linked by the frequent 905 service.</p>
	<p><i>Response</i></p>

*The necessity for improved transport connections between Camborne and Cambridge was recognised in the precept funded investment list. This improvement is initially focused on service 4 and working with the commercial operator on options to improve the frequency and reliability of the service. Work on that is ongoing to ensure residents who need an improved bus service, get it later this year.*

*We are also exploring with bus operators how Section 106 developer funding for the West Camborne development could be used to provide a service linking the site with Cambridge and St Neots, with an ambition to open this up to other parts of Camborne. In addition, we continue to encourage Stagecoach to serve Camborne with the 905 service, but as this operates on a commercial basis, it is at their discretion, and we appreciate it would add in journey time for St Neots residents.*

### Question 3 – from Richard Wood, Secretary, Cambridge Area Bus Users

To CA Board

WITH REFERENCE TO: Agenda Item 10 Bus Reform and Network Delivery Update

Cambridge Area Bus Users welcome the Bus Stop Database and programme for improvements, noting with some amusement “The audit also revealed the complexity of bus stops/shelter ownership, with a variety of arrangements through constituent councils.” (Agenda pack p168 of 259)

We also welcome the ambitious and well-thought out plans for service improvements (Agenda pack pp 174-176 of 259) together with a much-overdue interim Enhanced Partnership (EP) with bus operators, and the commitment “...to transform the customer experience of bus travel.” (Agenda pack p 177 of 259)

Our view is that the experience starts with finding the bus stop, which should have:

- a flag displaying service numbers and ‘towards’ information;
- a printed timetable or e-paper combined RTPI and scheduled timetable information;
- brief information on ticket options (to reduce dwell time whilst passengers ask drivers for information);
- information on where to find your stop in all key ‘hub’ locations (eg Cambridge city centre, rail station, Addenbrooke’s);
- bus route ‘spider’ maps as widely used in London and other locations in England;
- a shelter and seating wherever appropriate/possible;
- RTPI wherever appropriate/possible.

Will the Mayor commit to a rolling programme of bus stop improvements incorporating these key features provided, either directly by the Combined Authority, and/or constituent councils, and/or by bus operators as a requirement under EP arrangements, together with published design parameters for new installations, to which any constituent council must either comply or clearly explain to the CAPCA transport team the need for variance?

#### **Response**

*At the TIC in November 2023, officers outlined the approach to a bus stop audit across the region. The aim of the audit was to establish how many stops there are, where they are and an outline of their condition. At present 2981 stops have been identified in the Bus Stop database for the region.*

*With budget now approved to improve bus stops/shelters, officers have devised an initial methodology on how to apply the available funding in a targeted manner to have maximum benefit to passengers:*

- *Apply an assessment criteria to form an initial high priority 50 stops/shelters that would benefit from investment, linked to safety, security and ease of waiting environment.*
- *Develop a list for features that will be improved within budget requirements, with a clear before and after to demonstrate improvements to residents.*
- *Seek feedback from local Members and communities to inform the final approach.*
- *Link improvements to the precept investments, to ensure clearer monitoring and evaluation opportunities for investment in bus services and enable a more integrated, targeted package of improvements.*

*We will bring an update on this to future Transport and Infrastructure Committees.*

#### Question 4 – from Elizabeth McWilliams

To	CA Board
	<p>I would like to draw the Board's attention to my petition that expresses disappointment at the Stagecoach company's progressive cuts to the number 9 bus service and asks the Combined Authority to set up a new service that connects Milton, Waterbeach village and other villages to Ely, and which stops in these villages and not just on the A10.</p> <p><a href="https://www.change.org/p/reinstate-a-bus-serving-waterbeach-and-ely">https://www.change.org/p/reinstate-a-bus-serving-waterbeach-and-ely</a></p> <p>At the time of writing, this has attracted over 300 signatures and comments demonstrate the need for such a service: from those with limited mobility who cannot walk to the train station or from it into Ely at the other end; for students for whom it is their sole route to College; for residents of Milton, unable to get to the station. The petition should be read as complementary to a similar one set up by Emma Mayoux-Andrews, focused on Littleport.</p> <p>What is really needed is a better way to run our buses rather than this constant cycle of cuts, last minute saves and then cuts again. We need the Combined Authority to i) fill the gaps in the schedule left by the cuts to the current no 9 service in the short term; and ii) look into the longer term to offer a service which stops in the villages abandoned by Stagecoach.</p> <p>Can the Mayor offer assurances that we can not only save, but also improve, this route?</p>

#### Question 5 – from Councillor Lorna Dupre

To	CA Board
	<p>Liberal Democrats in Ely &amp; East Cambridgeshire call on the Combined Authority to provide funding to retain the current number 9 bus timetable. This will remove the current uncertainty for users of the number 9 bus from Littleport to Cambridge, via Ely and Waterbeach.</p> <p>This is a key bus route for residents in Littleport to get into Ely and Cambridge, and for residents in Little Thetford, Milton, Waterbeach and Stretham to travel north into Ely as well as south into Cambridge for work, study, leisure, and a host of other reasons.</p> <p>This should be seen as a first step only. The Combined Authority should urgently review the changes made to the route over recent years. Because the route is now only along the A10, people in Waterbeach and Milton no longer have ready access to the bus. Nor do they have a bus between the centre of the villages, to visit friends and relatives or access shops, vets and other services.</p> <p>Residents deserve a bus service that they can count on and make plans around. We urge the Combined Authority to move forward with implementing strong democratic control of bus services, so that residents are not faced with regular threats to withdraw or reduce the bus services on which they depend.</p>
	<p><i>Response</i></p> <p><i>Regarding the no 9 service and the recent Stagecoach service reductions, the Combined Authority were formally notified of changes to Stagecoach's commercial network, namely Services: F, 25 and 9. Within the current deregulated environment, commercial operators submit changes to services via the Traffic Commissioner.</i></p> <p><i>Unfortunately all the services outlined below were cited as significantly loss making and unable to continue in their current form.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>• Stagecoach has proposed changes to service 9, operating between Littleport, Ely, and Cambridge.</i></li><li><i>• At present, the service operates hourly in both directions during the morning and evening peak period, and every other hour during the off-peak period. This will be reduced to three journeys operating in each direction across the whole day.</i></li><li><i>• Using data provided by Stagecoach, it is estimated that the cost per passenger journey figure would be £1.76 for a potential contracted service. This is well below the benchmark of £12 that has previously been used</i></li></ul>

- **Due to the severe degradation in service that residents will face, it is recommended to introduce a contracted service that restores as much of the service to its current form, subject to a tender process.**
- However the movement of the times of the new service – for instance a 6am and 7am service moving to 6.36am makes that more difficult so we continue to work to maximise the service within the current deregulated environment.

*The CA continues to work hard to bring forward proposals for the reform of the bus service and indeed to develop the business case for franchising and to bring it to the Board for a decision to consult. The business case is complex and it is taking longer than we hoped. Meanwhile we are proposing an Enhanced Partnership with bus operators to try to maximise the service and co-ordination within the current market system. We will bring this forward this summer as we push the parallel work on franchising business case. This will allow the CPCA to be able to operate and manage the bus services rather than be subject to commercial decisions of bus companies.*

### Question 6 – from Councillor Anna Bailey

To CA Board

How much did the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority spend from May 2021 onwards on personal alarms and CCTV home security equipment for employees and their families as a result of the safeguarding issues arising from the toxic and bullying culture in the Office of the Mayor?

#### Response

*As the question related to the office of the Mayor, in the interest of fairness and to remove any appearance of conflict the Monitoring Officer responded to the question.*

*The only expenditure that the CPCA has spent on personal alarms or CCTV home security equipment since May 2021 was as a result of a confidential whistleblowing report being leaked to the press and subsequent police advice rather than any culture within the Mayor's Office. Total expenditure on the personal alarms and CCTV, according to the Authority's records, was £461.*

In a supplementary question, Councillor Bailey asked:

*On 1 December the mayor wrote to me stating that he was taking advice regarding what more he could do to alleviate concerns from a former member of staff and their spouse. Given the obvious distress articulated by the spouse, I presume with the former member of staff's consent, on social media, if he is able to expand on his written apology in a meaningful way he said he would do so. Can the Mayor confirm whether or not he has provided the meaningful apology and if not, why not?*

*The Mayor confirmed he had had several conversations with senior officers regarding how an appropriate outcome could be reached. He then handed over to the Monitoring Officer to respond to the supplementary question.*

*The Monitoring officer responded that in regard to any subsequent apology, as detailed in the decision notice published on 17 November 2023 the requirement of the A&G committee has been met by the Mayor. The requirement was that he should apologise. As reported at the November Board meeting, the Mayor did apologise. A&G, not myself or any senior officer, can dictate to the mayor how the apology should be drafted or worded. That would be going beyond what A&G required and would be bordering on breaching his right of expression. The Mayor did apologise and sent his apology through myself.*

*The Mayor added that in June 2021, as reported in local newspapers including the Ely Standard, a female member of staff in the Mayor's office was spat at on her way into work. This incident, along with other incidents occurring around the Mayor's office in Ely at that time, and before, prompted me to write to senior officers of the Combined Authority asking for the issue of staff safety and protection measures to be taken seriously. I reiterated the importance of safety of members and indeed staff following the tragic circumstances of the stabbing of David Ames when I spoke at a previous board meeting. I would hope this makes the point how I take these things very seriously.*