



COMBINED AUTHORITY BOARD

FRIDAY, 13 DECEMBER 2024 - EXTRAORDINARY MEETING

Venue:	Civic Suite, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon PE29 3TN	
Time:	10.00 am	
Present:	Dr Nik Johnson Councillor Anna Bailey Councillor Chris Boden Councillor Sarah Conboy Councillor Lucy Nethsingha Councillor Anna Smith Councillor John Williams Councillor Angus Ellis Al Kingsley	Mayor East Cambridgeshire District Council Fenland District Council Huntingdonshire District Council Cambridgeshire County Council Cambridge City Council South Cambridgeshire District Council (substitute) Peterborough City Council (substitute) Chair of Business Board
Apologies	Councillor Bridget Smith Councillor Dennis Jones Darryl Preston John O'Brien	South Cambridgeshire District Council Peterborough City Council Police and Crime Commissioner Integrated Care Board

Minutes

1	Apologies for Absence
	Apologies were received from Darryl Preston, John O'Brien, Councillor Bridget Smith (Councillor John Williams substituting) and Councillor Dennis Jones (Councillor Angus Ellis substituting).
2	Declaration of Interests
	There were no declaration of interests made.
3	Proposal for Local Bus Fare Cap [KD2024/068]
	<p>The Executive Director, Place and Connectivity, introduced the report and highlighted key points to members.</p> <p>Extending the £2 fare cap for three months is estimated to cost approximately £1 million. A £2.50 cap would cost slightly more than half of that due to fixed cost considerations.</p> <p>Members expressed disappointment over the BSIP underspend, which were attributed to the volume of work on Tiger Pass, bus reform and day to day delivery with a small team, which has hindered project delivery.</p> <p>The decision bypassed the usual Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) process due to its urgency. The Chair of O&S was notified, and it was confirmed that the matter could undergo scrutiny in the new year. Members acknowledged the importance of pre-scrutiny and welcomed future engagement.</p> <p>Support was expressed for extending the fare cap, with members highlighting its importance in maintaining affordability, encouraging public transport use, and supporting recovery of passenger numbers post-pandemic.</p>

Concerns were raised about fragile commercial routes, the broader sustainability of services, and the limited value of fare caps in areas with reduced or unreliable services.

Members noted significant service reductions, particularly in Fenland and rural areas, resulting in unmet needs despite residents contributing to the mayoral precept..

Suggestions were made to reprioritise BSIP funds for network improvements.

Questions were raised about the sustainability of the fare cap, particularly its potential inclusion in a future budget for 2025/26, and the financial trade-offs with other network improvements.

The short-term extension of the £2 cap to March 2025 was seen as a measure to support passengers and stabilise services while longer-term decisions are made.

The Mayor reiterated the need for consensus and collaboration in addressing challenges, including wider budgetary considerations in January.

Members requested a new list of all subsidised routes that are running, the known cost of those subsidies, the number of passenger journeys and costs per passenger journey.

On being proposed by Mayor, seconded by Cllr Anna Smith, it was resolved:

- A To retain the bus fare cap at £2 per single journey for those participating operators in the Combined Authority area from 1 January 2025 to 31 March 2025.
- B To delegate authority to the Assistant Director for Transport (Public Transport Services) to engage with local operators to ensure the new local fare cap is implemented.
- C To note that any consideration on extending the fare cap beyond 31 March 2025 will be part of the 2025/26 budget setting report in January 2025.

The votes for recommendation A are recorded below.

Recommendation B was carried by majority (7 for, 0 against, 2 abstentions)

	For	Against	Abstain
Mayor	X		
Cllr Anna Smith	X		
Cllr Angus Ellis	X		
Al Kingsley	X		
Cllr Anna Bailey			X
Cllr Chris Boden			X
Cllr Lucy Nethsingha	X		
Cllr Sarah Conboy	X		
Cllr John Williams	X		

Chairman at the meeting on
Friday, 13 December 2024