



Transport & Infrastructure Committee

18 September 2024

Title:	Director's Highlight Report: September 2024
Report of:	Judith Barker, Executive Director – Place & Connectivity
Lead Member:	Councillor Anna Smith, Chair of Transport and Infrastructure Committee
Public Report:	Yes
Key Decision:	No
Voting Arrangements:	No vote required

Recommendations:

A	Note the content of this report.
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Strategic Objective(s):

The proposals within this report fit under the following strategic objective(s):

X	Achieving good growth
X	Increased connectivity
X	Enabling resilient communities

1 Purpose

1.1	This report provides a general update on the key activities of the Place and Connectivity Directorate in relation to Transport and Infrastructure, which are not covered in other reports to this meeting. It also provides information on some key developments, risks and opportunities that have emerged.
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2 Recent and Forthcoming Events

2.1	<p>Impact of the new government</p> <p>The new Labour government are considering the level and quantum of its devolution of powers to Mayoral Combined Authorities, which may allow us more control over local transport decisions. The scope will be confirmed in the autumn with publication of the White Paper on devolution following the Kings Speech in July. Labour's approach could also involve enhancing the integration of transport systems, making travel more seamless for passengers. Additionally, there appears to be a stronger emphasis on addressing regional disparities in transport infrastructure, ensuring that there is a specific focus on improving connectivity and economic growth.</p> <p>The Secretary of State for Transport, Ms. Louise Haigh, has outlined five key strategic priorities aimed at placing transport at the core of a mission-driven government. These priorities are designed to enhance the efficiency and inclusivity of the UK's transport network while addressing regional inequalities and environmental challenges. The strategic priorities are as follows:</p>
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- **Railway Performance and Reform:** Focused efforts on improving the performance of the railways, coupled with driving forward comprehensive rail reform, to ensure a more reliable and efficient service for passengers across the country.
- **Bus Services Improvement and Usage Growth:** A commitment to enhancing bus services, with an emphasis on increasing usage nationwide, ensuring that bus networks remain a vital and accessible mode of transportation for all communities.
- **Infrastructure Transformation:** Aiming to develop infrastructure that benefits the entire country, the strategy promotes social mobility and tackles regional inequalities by ensuring equitable access to modern and efficient transport systems.
- **Greener Transport:** A significant push towards delivering greener transport solutions, aligning with broader environmental goals and the need to reduce carbon emissions across all modes of transportation.
- **Integration of Transport Networks:** A focus on better integrating various transport networks to create a more cohesive, seamless, and user-friendly system, facilitating smoother and more efficient travel for passengers.

These strategic priorities strongly align with the goals, aims and objectives of the Combined Authority's Local Transport and Connectivity Plan, approved in November 2023, and therefore the work programme and pipeline of the Authority and partners.

The Government and Combined Authority with partners are progressing its work on a Local Growth Plan. Local Growth Plans are seen as essential for driving economic development, enhancing infrastructure, and ensuring sustainable progress tailored to the needs of the economic growth and community. It is therefore key for the Combined Authority to outline the importance of greater connectivity, infrastructure, and integration to ensure we deliver. On 9 September, we hosted a ministerial visit by Simon Lightwood MP whereby the Mayor was able to highlight the work of the Combined Authority and potential for future improvements to the city of Peterborough and the wider region's transport network.

On 9 September 2024, the Combined Authority was pleased to host in Peterborough, the Secretary of State, Louise Haigh as she announced the "biggest overhaul to buses in a generation". The intention of the Government's Better Buses Bill is looking to introduce measures for areas where there are no plans to introduce franchising currently and to simplify the process of considering bus reform. The event was attended by the mayor and deputy mayor with the Peterborough MPs, Andrew Pakes and Sam Carling.

2.2 Shared Ambition Statement

The draft Shared Ambition seeks to unite stakeholders behind a long-term shared sense of direction that celebrates the strengths and unique features of the region and recognises the long-term challenges that require collective focus and in doing so create an equitable, pioneering, connected, and resilient community that benefits everyone in our society.

Throughout July and August, a broad range of engagement was undertaken with stakeholders, residents, and elected members to understand what was most important to them and to test out the emerging Shared Ambition Framework. Feedback has been received, analysed and is now being incorporated into the revised Shared Ambition document scheduled to go to the Combined authority Board in October.

2.3 Infrastructure Delivery Framework

The Infrastructure Delivery Framework was commissioned by Environment and Sustainable Communities Committee in 2023.

Stantec were commissioned by the Combined Authority (CPCA) to develop an Infrastructure Delivery Framework (IDF) for the region. The primary objective is to assess and identify existing and emerging infrastructure barriers that may be hindering housing and employment growth.

Key outcomes of the IDF include:

- A process that provides strategic insights into infrastructure barriers impacting the delivery of current and future Local Plan growth.

- A document that enables CPCA and its partners to clearly communicate the scale of financial investment needed to address these barriers, with a focus on transport infrastructure given the complexities of energy, digital, and water systems.
- A series of recommended actions, supported by stakeholders, addressing both technical and non-technical challenges.

The work looked at 4 subject areas:

- Energy
- Water
- Blue/green infrastructure
- Connectivity

The report remains in draft at present and will be formally presented to committees in October, but a verbal update will be provided to the Committee and a workshop can be arranged if members would find this helpful.

3 Combined Authority activity updates

3.1 Peterborough Station Quarter (PSQ) Update & Public Engagement

Since the Outline Business Case was approved by the Department for Transport in March 2024, work with the project partners and designers ARUP has focused on developing and optimising the Outline Business Case designs for the Full Business Case. This work is seeking to:

- Better integrate public realm and access to and from the city centre through the creation of a new boulevard between Queensgate roundabout and the station;
- Improve the prominence of the new eastern station square;
- Consolidate surface car parking to unlock land for alternative uses; and
- Give more prominence of active travel routes.

Further design work is required before the Full Business Case will be submitted to DfT early in the next calendar year. Engaging the public at this stage is an opportunity to update the public on progress since the Outline Business Case was submitted and creates an opportunity to understand the public's priorities for the scheme before the design is finalised. This engagement is not a statutory requirement as the scheme is expected to be covered by existing highway powers and rail industry permitted development powers.

As the project lead for PSQ, the public engagement is being led by Peterborough City Council (PCC), who were unable to launch the public engagement during the pre-election period. The public engagement covers the entire Government funded scheme.

The public engagement period started on 20 August 2024 and closes on 27 September 2024.

Engagement activities include:

- A series of pop-up events in the community at locations such as the train station and city centre to publicise the proposals, drive engagement and gather views.
- Group Stakeholder meetings and workshops with thematically linked groups of stakeholders to outline plans and receive feedback. The number of these required will vary according to the level and type of stakeholder interest.
- A survey in paper form and online ([Peterborough Station Quarter | Peterborough City Council](#))

Next Steps - Target Timeline:

- **Public Engagement:** 20th August – 27th September.
- **Investment Committee approval to submit the Full Business Case to DfT:** Early 2025.
- **Start of Construction:** Late Spring/Summer 2025.

As is normal with major projects of this scale in the rail industry, partners are continuing work to mitigate key risks. In addition to receiving Outline Business Case approval by the Department for Transport, recent progress in this regard includes work to mitigate the risk of delays and increased costs for consenting by ensuring the scheme remains within existing highway powers and rail industry permitted development powers.

	<p>Further design work and management of interdependencies and requirements from project partners is needed over the next few months to mitigate key risks noted in the Outline Business Case, alongside work to maintain affordability. Officers will also be engaging with the Department for Transport to understand how to smoothen the Full Business Case approval process and delivery programme.</p> <p>The initial phase of the Peterborough Station Quarter project, which forms the foundation of the current public engagement, will serve as a crucial catalyst for future development stages: by unlocking key parcels of land, this phase will pave the way for significant private investment, enabling the realisation of a comprehensive mixed-use masterplan. This broader vision includes the creation of new commercial and residential spaces, along with substantial enhancements to public transport links and active travel infrastructure. As this ambitious long-term plan progresses, it will continue to adapt, considering a range of development opportunities across the wider area, including potential upgrades to local landmarks like the Great Northern Hotel.</p>
3.2	<p>Active Travel Update</p> <p>In Active Travel England’s (ATE) revised <i>Local Authority Active Travel Capability Ratings 2024</i>, the Combined Authority is one of only six Local Authorities to achieve a Level 3 Rating (80 Local Authorities in total nationwide). Ratings are an assessment of how effective Authorities currently are at planning, designing, and delivering the type of schemes that will support the objectives set out in the Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy. The Combined Authority is the only Local Authority to have moved into Level 3 rating this year and reflects our ongoing commitment to active travel.</p> <p>The concept of the Walking, Wheeling, and Cycling Commissioner (formally known as Cycling Tsar or Active Travel Ambassador) was taken to the Combined Authority’s Corporate Management Team this month to discuss the finer details of the role and progress has been made in relation to the requirements for the role. The goal is to make a key appointment in 2025, following a dynamic and forward-thinking campaign driven by the updated Active Travel Strategy. This proactive approach will ensure that the selection process aligns with the latest priorities in sustainable transport and mobility, setting the stage for a more connected and accessible future. By leveraging the insights and initiatives outlined in the refreshed Strategy, the campaign will aim to attract visionary leadership capable of steering the program toward long-term success.</p> <p>At ATE’s request the Combined Authority have created a Design Review Panel. The panel, which has representatives from Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC), PCC, ATE and the Combined Authority, will review infrastructure schemes to ensure they consider all users’ needs and meet the criteria set out in ATE funding.</p> <p>The Combined Authority are investing in the Walking and Cycling Index. Currently this survey data is only collected within the Greater Cambridge area, however the Combined Authority are looking to expand this sample to incorporate the whole region, allowing for a wider understanding of residents needs in relation to active travel.</p> <p>In conjunction with CCC, the Combined Authority submitted a bid to the A428 National Highways Social Value Fund. The scheme will provide a bridge and ramps over Hail Wester Ford which would allow a safer and more accessible crossing over the ford. Finalists in the bidding process will be asked to present their bid at the end of September.</p>
3.6	<p>Wisbech Access Strategy</p> <p>The Wisbech Access Strategy (WAS) is a comprehensive suite of transport improvement schemes designed to enhance the efficiency and connectivity of Wisbech’s transport network. The WAS will play a pivotal role in addressing current and future mobility needs, as part of the Fenland District Council’s emerging transport strategy. The successful implementation of this full package will be integral to advancing the Local Growth Plan, fostering economic development, and ensuring that Wisbech remains well-connected and sustainable as the area continues to grow and evolve.</p> <p>As part of the WAS work, the CA agreed with CCC to the demolition of 218 Ramnoth Road, Wisbech. The property was bought as part of the Weasenham Lane/A1101 Roundabout project in readiness for any future funding becoming available for construction. The flats have been empty for some time and are not required by either Fenland District or CCC for any other purpose. Work to demolish the flats is due to start in October and is expected to take 3 months, subject to weather conditions.</p>

	<p>Once demolished the area will be seeded with wildflowers with a post and rail fence (to prevent parking/vehicles entering). The wildflowers will be maintained with an annual cut by CCC. Further funding for construction has not yet been identified.</p>
3.7	<p>Thorpe Wood Cycle Way</p> <p>PCC will shortly start constructing a sustainable travel scheme on Thorpe Wood. The scheme is programmed to start on site in September and expected to complete in spring 2025. Funding for the scheme was secured through ATE's Active Travel Fund 3 and Active Travel Fund 4 by PCC and Combined Authority working closely together to develop the bid.</p> <p>Included in the scheme will be the construction of new and widened footways, a segregated bi-directional cycleway, two zebra and cycle crossings and the installation of a new bus shelter. The improvements will provide better facilities to those that already choose to travel sustainably within the area, and it is also expected that the new facilities will encourage more people to make the change to more sustainable modes of transport when travelling to work or for leisure.</p>
3.8	<p>Ely-Cambridge Corridor</p> <p>The Combined Authority has been working with our delivery partners (CCC and their principal consultants WSP) to undertake a strategic review against new national and current local priorities. With the new government in place, it is important that we align this project's objectives with latest strategy and policy as that will enable any funding to be accessed.</p> <p>A Strategic (Milestone) Gateway Review represents a pivotal assessment point, designed to evaluate project progress, verify alignment with overarching objectives, and ensure the initiative remains on course to achieve its intended benefits.</p> <p>The scope of the review is in the process of being finalised and is expected to unfold in two phases. It will likely encompass a thorough examination of key elements such as the project's communications strategy, governance structures, with the clarity and alignment of objectives. Additionally, the review will scrutinise project management methodologies, with a focus on their effectiveness in delivering high-quality outputs that meet established standards and stakeholder expectations. This comprehensive evaluation will be instrumental in reinforcing confidence in the project's trajectory and long-term success.</p> <p>An update will be provided to the committee and a member workshop can be arranged if helpful to update on the scope of the review.</p>
3.9	<p>Investment Panel and Investment Committee</p> <p>With the introduction of the Single Assurance Framework from June 2024, detailed decisions about funding within the strategic decisions set by thematic committees are being taken by Investment Committee for any funding over £1m. For funding below that amount a decision is taken by the Chief Executive following the scrutiny of an officer Investment Panel. All committee papers go through the Investment Panel first. Above £5m, decisions are taken by the Board. This process is still bedding in, and it is clearly important to bring updates to the thematic committees including Transport and Infrastructure Committee.</p> <p>For the Committee's context the Terms of Reference of the Investment Committee are as follows:</p> <p>The Investment Committee shall:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. in accordance with the Single Assurance Framework and the Constitution of the Combined Authority, make investment decisions and/or make recommendations to the Board on investment decisions. B. play a key part in the overall assurance arrangements of the Combined Authority through the delivery of its functions. C. advise and make decisions in line with delegated authority on behalf of the Mayor and the Combined Authority Board in the exercise of responsibilities for the Combined Authority's functions as corporate shareholder of a company or group of companies and in their role in representing the Combined Authority as a Shareholder Representative at meetings of a company.

	<p>D. provide the necessary oversight, from a shareholder’s perspective, that the parameters, policies, and boundaries that the Combined Authority has established are being adhered to; Including a regular review of whether the Subsidiary provides the most effective vehicle to deliver the outcomes the Combined Authority requires and whether there are viable alternative models which might offer a more effective means of delivering its priorities</p> <p>In August, Investment Committee reviewed the concept paper for the funding for the Digital Connectivity Year 1 funding. Once TIC has considered the strategy, a business case with more detail can be brought forward. They also considered the funding for the Fens Road project which again will be further considered at the business case stage.</p> <p>For any member wanting more details, please see the Single Assurance Framework here.</p> <p>The next two projects will also be assessed through this process.</p>
3.10	<p>Cygnets Bridge, Peterborough</p> <p>Towns funding and Combined Authority financial contributions are enabling a new walking and cycling connection between the Embankment and Fletton Quays in Peterborough. Cygnets Bridge is undergoing detailed design and Full Business Case Process with a view for construction in 2025. The delivery date is to minimise working when flood risk is higher and enable further work to reduce initial cost estimates, including value engineering, procurement options and design.</p>
3.11	<p>A1139 University Access, Peterborough</p> <p>A1139 University Access Outline Business Case focuses on the highway network near to the Embankment area, including Junction 5 of the Frank Perkins Parkway and the surrounding roads of Bishops Road, Vineyard Road and Boongate. During the progression of the business case a key location, Wellington St Carpark was sold for development. This location had been identified in the business case as a travel hub, intercepting traffic.</p> <p>Following the sale of the land for development and other development in the area, it may be necessary to revisit the previous stage of the business case process to ensure the aims and objectives remain relevant and the optioneering valid. However, the existing work has highlighted a number of positive active travel proposals which could, if funding were available, be taken forward. The next step would be to take any proposal through the Single Assurance Framework.</p>

4 Appendices

4.1	None
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5 Implications

Financial Implications	
5.1	None.
Legal Implications	
5.2	None.
Public Health Implications	
5.3	None.
Environmental & Climate Change Implications	
5.4	Neutral.
Other Significant Implications	
5.5	None.

Background Papers	
5.6	None.