



Transport and Infrastructure Committee

18 September 2024

Title: Public Questions

Public Report: Yes

Question 1 – from Dr William Harrold, Cambridge Approaches

To Transport and Infrastructure Committee

Question:

East West Rail's preferred model for Cambridge commuters was presented in their May 2023 Economic and Technical Report (ETR).

This model predicts an additional 20,135 non-rail commuters to Cambridge from EWR dependent housing. We assume these would be predominantly car commuters. For comparison, the total number of Cambridge car commuters reported in the 2011 census was 42,400. This would therefore be a 50% increase on that.

It is also a lot more than the predicted number of EWR rail commuters.

When asked about this, East West Rail said: "in terms of additional car commuter traffic into Cambridge, we assume that any additional journeys into the city would need to be facilitated by public transport."

What plans does the CPCA have to provide public transport for these additional 20,135 road commuters if East West Rail Bedford to Cambridge goes ahead?

Response:

Thank you for your inquiry regarding East West Rail.

Improvements to key strategic corridors, such as East-West Rail, serve as a cornerstone of the Authority's *Local Transport and Connectivity Plan*. This infrastructure project would not only enhance regional mobility but also promote economic growth, reduce congestion, and foster sustainable development. By linking key urban centres and improving access to rural areas, the East-West Rail could play a crucial role in shaping the region's future transport network, supporting the Authority's broader vision for a more connected, efficient, and greener transportation system. As is the case with most transport services across the region, the Combined Authority, even in its capacity as the Strategic Transport Authority, currently has limited direct control over their provision. Our role, therefore, is to advocate, persuade, and encourage service providers to recognise and act upon the mutual benefits of enhancing transport options, in line with the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan's vision, aims and objectives. By doing so, we aim to expand the choices available to the people of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, ensuring better service offerings for the region.

At this stage, we are awaiting the release of the consultation material from EWR Company, which will provide greater detail on their proposals and how they envisage this being integrated seamlessly into a broader transport network. Once this information is made available, we will carefully assess the potential impacts and review how these align with local transport planning and the need for further infrastructure development investment.

As the Combined Authority, we are committed to ensuring that any increase in commuter traffic is sustainably managed, minimised, and mitigated wherever possible. We seek that EWR Company consider with the Combined Authority and partners, all available data, and tools to address public transport needs, while also factoring in the necessity to mitigate congestion, reduce emissions, and promote more sustainable commuting alternatives. This will involve close collaboration and cooperation with EWR Company to ensure that a comprehensive package of sustainable solutions is developed and successfully delivered. Working together will be important in achieving outcomes that meet shared goals and contribute to long-term environmental and transport sustainability.

In the context of our ongoing discussions with East West Rail Company, it is essential to emphasise the importance of providing diverse and convenient options for the first and last mile. This will be key to enhancing overall connectivity to the service. As the project evolves, the Combined Authority and its constituent Councils remain committed to working closely with EWR Company to envision and implement a fully integrated transport network. Achieving this goal will necessitate a comprehensive understanding of local needs, as well as the identification and support of complementary initiatives—particularly regarding funding and effective delivery. EWR Company, alongside other partners, must ensure that these initiatives align with broader transport objectives, fostering seamless connections for communities and improving overall accessibility.

We look forward to providing a more comprehensive response when further information is provided by EWR Company and will continue to work closely with all relevant stakeholders to ensure that the long-term transport needs of Cambridge and the surrounding region are effectively addressed. Officers will deliver regular updates to the Transport and Infrastructure Committee, ensuring consistent communication as both the consultation process and the development of the scheme progress. These updates will provide critical insights into the evolving nature of the project, enabling the Committee to stay informed about key milestones, challenges, and opportunities. By maintaining this ongoing dialogue, officers will ensure that the Committee is well-positioned to guide the scheme's direction and respond proactively to emerging issues, fostering a collaborative approach to delivering a successful and impactful transport initiative.

With regard to the specific technical queries you raised, officers from the Combined Authority will be pleased to provide a more detailed and comprehensive response to the consultation in due course. At the present time, no analysis has taken place in relation to the trip generations assumptions made by EWR - this will be considered alongside other factors contained within their material. Therefore, it is agreed that further work is required by the Combined Authority on the publication of any EWR consultation material to allow a formal stance to be taken in relation to the first/last mile, trip generation and an overall position.

Question 2 – from Simon Martin, resident in CPCA Area

To Transport and Infrastructure Committee

Question:

I am pleased to see that the Combined Authority has started to launch the 30 "new and improved" Precept-funded bus routes, and I look forward to the further improvements in Item 13 Appendix 1, listed as forthcoming during October and November.

You may remember that at the March 2024 TIC meeting, I asked about Public Transport Statistics in the Director's Highlights report. Since then, they have disappointingly been omitted from that report, as they are today. I trust that the reporting of Public Transport statistics will return using new, useful, and relevant metrics in the near future.

<p>However, this time my question relates to the 30 "new and improved" bus routes specifically - Please can the Combined Authority provide details of the metrics that it will be using to monitor and evaluate these "new and improved" routes, how often they will be measured and reported to TIC and the Board, and what actions will be taken to ensure each of the 30 Bus Service Improvement interventions are working in a positive way, meeting both the needs of the Combined Authority and the public?</p>
<p>Response:</p> <p>The Combined Authority are currently working up specific plans to monitor and evaluate the precept funded bus services as they launch across the autumn/winter 2024.</p> <p>It is envisaged that the first monitoring report will be brought to TIC in early 2025. The monitoring plan will be informed by quantitative measures (such as patronage, reliability and punctuality) and qualitative (focused passenger surveys and feedback).</p> <p>The Combined Authority will then be able to assess the data and survey feedback and link it back to the cost of the investment as well as wider social and environmental objectives (access to education, healthcare, work, leisure opportunities). Subsequent TIC meetings will discuss the need to improve the performance monitoring, with an update expected at the November Committee meeting.</p>