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Cottenham Parish Council response to CPCA Local Transport Plan consultation – September 2019

Context

Cottenham Parish Council is responding to the CPCA (Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority) Local Transport Plan consultation on behalf of Cottenham residents, based on how we view the LTP will impact on their transport choices. There are some important background details which affect Cottenham and hence its requirements of transport infrastructure:

- Cottenham is a large village in South Cambridgeshire, approx. 6 miles north of Cambridge city. Its current population is approx. 6,700 which will expand to approx. 8,000 over the next 10 years due to unplanned development resulting from speculative applications based on inadequate housing land supply. Because this expansion has not been planned there is no associated improvements in transport infrastructure to mitigate it. This plan seems unaware of unplanned developments.
- It is situated on the B1049 in a 'no man's land' between A14/M11 and Guided Bus to the West and the A10, rail connection (Waterbeach) and potentially Autonomous Metro to the East. Because of the current lack of radial (i.e. East-West) connections by public transport or cycle routes the only way of accessing these key transport routes is by car. Public transport is limited to a thrice hourly bus service to Cambridge involving a long detour around Histon and Impington. The main barriers to use are the unacceptably long journey times into central Cambridge and the high cost (Cottenham being outside Stagecoach's Dayrider fare). In addition, lack of direct service to Hills Road and Long Road Sixth Form Colleges and Addenbrookes hospital causes real difficulties for many Cottenham residents.
- There are increasing numbers of car drivers commuting to Cambridge via Cottenham from lower cost housing to the North.
- Cottenham is prone to heavy additional traffic loads when drivers divert to the B1049 in order to avoid problems on A14 and/or A10
- The closeness of many properties on High Street/B1049 to the carriageway, particularly older houses, adversely affects quality of life through loss of sleep, exposure to traffic pollution and noise/vibration. Traffic-related issues were cited as the most significant downside to living in Cottenham in a village-wide survey (973 respondents) conducted in 2016.

Conclusion

It is our conclusion that Cottenham may be adversely affected by the proposed Local Transport Plan, but could benefit if:

- the connection to Waterbeach and its proposed enhanced transport hub is greatly improved, including the provision of a fast and frequent bus service and safe cycle path
- the bus service to Cambridge is enhanced by inclusion of at least hourly express services direct to Cambridge city centre (under half hour journey)
- funding is provided/improved for a community transport service ideally using electric buses which deliver frequent rush hour connections to the Guide Busway at Oakington and the Autonomous Metro and train service at Waterbeach
- imaginative solutions are developed and deployed throughout the villages of South Cambridgeshire to provide the electric vehicle infrastructure so necessary for the continued viability of many rural communities

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Observations: We have a number of observations on aspects of the LTP in terms of its impact on Cottenham residents:

Aspect	Good for Cambridgeshire?	Good for Cottenham?	Bad for Cottenham?	Comment
Cambridgeshire Autonomous Metro (§3.74 & §3.90)	✓	?		Only beneficial to Cottenham if residents can access the CAM at Waterbeach by frequent and fast public transport
A10 dualling (§3.76)	✓	✓		Cambridge and Ely have both expanded westward with north-south “traffic desire lines” increasing traffic on B1049; A10 dualling may help.
Changed bus priorities on Histon Rd (§3.86)			X	Likely to limit capacity and increase delays for the private car journeys vital to many Cottenham residents.
‘Dutch-standard’ walking and cycling routes (§3.87)	✓	✓		But reliance on these will disadvantage residents who are unable to cycle or walk to work.
Improved rail services (inter/intra regional?) (§3.91)	?			Cottenham is 5 miles from the nearest railway station – beyond normal cycling and walking ranges – needs a fast interconnect.
Integrated bus services and transport hubs	?			Hubs can only work if there are active spokes – a significant increase in the capacity and coverage in the interconnected bus or rail services
Demand management/ congestion charging (§3.67)	?		X	With Cottenham residents not serviced in any manner by the LTP, any form of demand management is a bad thing, in both increased cost and loss of time, for the mostly car-dependent village and is especially harmful for the lower-paid.
Absence of improvement to Freight routes			X	The Cambridgeshire Freight Advisory routes need to be completed and linked more effectively with satellite navigation systems.
Traffic reduction (1 in 4 removal) §3.50			X	Cottenham is identified as a rural village, and not serviced in any manner by current proposals. §3.68 suggests the LTP intends Cottenham journeys to be made by car on the ‘highway network’.
Waterbeach New Town (§3.74)	X		X	Car traffic from WBC NT may continue to pass via the unclassified and unfit Cottenham/Beach Road through Cottenham to bypass issues on the A14 around Cambridge. No alternative routes have been suggested.
Failure to extend network coverage and include consideration of electric vehicle infrastructure	X		X	A significant proportion of the population, even within villages like Cottenham, lives beyond walking distance of public transport and our population is ageing. Vilifying car usage is not helpful for the many that depend on cars; support for transition to electric cars is vital unless a dramatic increase in public transport coverage can be achieved.

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Footnote:

Although not focused on a generic modal shift towards public transport in general, the 973 responses to the questions in the Cottenham Neighbourhood Plan survey about using buses more, give some supportive insights:

- According to the Neighbourhood Plan survey (973 responses in early 2016), residents of larger villages like Cottenham appear to find the distance to the nearest bus stop is a disincentive as is transit time to their destination. Bus usage was highest for Rampton Road area respondents, of whom 42% said they used the bus at least once a week.
- Overall:
 - Seven in ten (71%) said a shorter and more direct journey to Cambridge would encourage them to use the bus more often. More than three quarters in both sixth form and working-age age groups said this would encourage them to use the bus more.
 - Forty-eight per cent said a service to the guided bus at Oakington would encourage them. This %age increased in older groups - 56% of those aged 65-74 chose this response, as did 53% of those aged 75 and above.
 - 44% cited cheaper fares as an incentive. Cheaper fares were most important (82% for those aged 16-24 said they would use the bus more.
 - Those with children under five living in their household were more likely to want a shorter journey time or a more direct service to Cambridge (81%), and a bus service to Waterbeach (30%) compared to those with older children or no children in their household.

Find it on-line

The full set of papers is [here](#) .

See page 92 – 105 of the full plan for matters possibly relating to Cottenham (deemed to be in Greater Cambridge).

The [online](#) response is pointless and disingenuous – asking participants to rank 10 priorities without reference to specific policies.

Do take a look; we'll be finalising our response early in September but the on-line commentary remains open for a few weeks after that.

P.S. Cottenham does get mentioned – once!