TWA application by Cambridgeshire County Council:
Cambridge South East Transport (CSET)

Anthony Orgee

[redacted]

WRITTEN STATEMENT

Introduction

The Cambridge South East Transport Local Liaison Forum (CSET LLF), originally known until November 2017 as the A1307 LLF, was set up in early 2017 and met for the first time on 20 February 2017. I was chair of the CSET LLF from its first meeting in 2017 until it was replaced by the South Area Forum in mid-2021.

A GCP Executive Board meeting held on 30 June 2022 included an agenda item entitled *Cambridge South East Transport Scheme (*agenda item 9). Paragraph 1.15 of the agenda report described the LLF as 'expressing a preference for an off-road solution that served the local villages'. The minutes of the meeting record that **: '**While discussing the report, the Executive Board expressed concern over how the CSETS route had been presented and redesigned throughout its development, drawing attention to the proximity of the route to local communities that it was not designed to serve. However**, it was observed that the Local Liaison Forum and most of the local communities had supported the route selection**.

In my view this is not a fair or accurate description of the LLF's views. I assume that views expressed by the CSET LLF at any point in time were based on the information and evidence available at that particular time. This written statement argues that the views of the LLF were both time-bound and context-bound and that by 2021 there was general opposition in the LLF to the proposed scheme.

The LLF's views were time-bound in that they were based on the information available at any particular time, and context-bound in relation to the varying BCRs put forward at various times and the inconsistency of the GCP's Executive Board decisions in relation to those figures – no further consideration of a scheme with a BCR of 1.27 in 2016, not doing further work with Strategies 2 [BCR in range 3.58 to 4.28] and Strategy 3 [BCR in range 3.29 to 4.23] in 2018, agreeing to consult of five different route alignments in 2020 when each had a BCR of lower than 1, and finally supporting the present scheme with a BCR of lower than 1.

Summary

The *A1307 Haverhill to Cambridge Corridor: Draft Concepts Report: WSP Parsons Brinckerhoff*, published in January 2016 considered and recommended that three options: a rail scheme, a Bus Rapid Transport (BRT) option using the disused railway corridor between Haverhill and Cambridge and a road improvements scheme be discounted (para 1.4.2) . In

particular, the assessment of the Bus Rapid Transport scheme concluded that this scheme would represent **low value** for money with a Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) of **1.27**.

The GCP Executive Board meeting held on 3 March 2016 unanimously **agreed to discount from further consideration** as part of the Greater Cambridge City Deal … providing a Busway all the way to Haverhill.

In due course three Cambridge South East Transport strategies were developed for consultation in early 2018: an off-road Mass Rapid Transit route (Strategy 1), on-road bus lanes and a public transport link to Cambridge Biomedical Campus (Strategy 2) and an on-road bus lanes only route (Strategy 3).

At the 11 October 2018 Executive Board meeting the Chair of the LLF did state that **the LLF broadly supported Strategy 1**. However, it must be borne in mind that **the LLF's views were based on the information then available**. At that time, the likely benefits of Strategy 1 were stated to be £280 to £320 million and the likely costs £139 to £145 million, giving a range of BCRs from 1.93 to 2.46. The Executive Board discussed the report and in expressing their support for the proposals noted that the cost benefit of the scheme **[Strategy 1] was good**.

However, the LLF's views at the time were nuanced as the Chair also reported that there was some support for not ruling out light rail and, if Strategy 1 could not be taken forward then the LLF would support strategy 2 or 3 going forward. Strategies 2 and 3 had lower benefits and lower costs than Strategy 1, but higher ranges of benefit cost ratios.

However, by the time of the Executive Board meeting held on 25 June 2020 which described five potential route alignments for Strategy 1, the BCR for each of the options considered was lower than 1, with the BCR ratio for the preferred route was being quoted as 0.71, As section 9.23 of the officer report to that meeting stated: **'All options at present represent a Poor VfM case, based on the DfT appraisal criteria.**

By the time of the 7 June 2021 LLF meeting some, if not most, members of the LLF had lost confidence in what they were being told by the GCP because of its decision to press ahead with the Preferred route given the low figure now quoted for its BCR 0.71 (compared with the BCR implied of about or just over 2 in the 2018 consultation leaflet) and the unchanged low value of this figure when a significant change in car parking spaces was made compared to previous information thus presumably reducing the benefits of the scheme.

The 1 July 2021 meeting of the Executive Board decided which of the five route alignment to support. The BCR quoted in the agenda papers for the preferred route remained at 0.71.

The Chair of the CSET Local Liaison Forum informed the Executive Board that at its 1 June 2021 LLF meeting GCP staff and its consultants were asked *how could the GCP progress such an **uneconomic scheme,** a scheme that had a Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) of 0.71 ?'* There was a somewhat fractious exchange of views about the BCR, focused on the question: *'How is the BCR affected by the planned reduction in car parking spaces at the Travel Hub ?' Participants found it difficult, if not impossible, to believe that such a large reduction in the number of car parking spaces from figures quoted previously could have no impact on the value of the BCR. **In conclusion**, the LLF questioned whether the Scheme is fit for purpose given the significant reduction in car parking spaces at the Travel Hub, and whether the scheme represented value for money.'*

The comments above show that by June 2021 there was a general feeling in the LLF that the BCR for the preferred scheme was so low and such a poor use of public money that they felt no longer able to support the scheme. In other words, **the LLF had reached a stage where it was broadly felt that Strategy 1 should not be taken forward, and that other schemes should therefore be considered.**

The minutes of the GCP's Executive Board meeting on 1 July 2021 covering discussion of the route alignment show no consideration of the BCR and value for money issues raised by the LLF.

Supporting Information

1 Background

The A1307 corridor to include bus priority and A1307 additional Park & Ride was included as one of the prioritized schemes in the Greater Cambridge Partnership's *Prioritised Investment Programme 2015-2020.*

2 The WSP Parsons Brinckerhoff 2016 Report

The *A1307 Haverhill to Cambridge Corridor: Draft Concepts Report: WSP Parsons Brinckerhoff*, *January 2016* was commissioned by Cambridgeshire County Council and published in January 2016., This Report considered and recommended that three options: a rail scheme, a Bus Rapid Transport (BRT) option using the disused railway corridor between Haverhill and Cambridge and a road improvements scheme be discounted (para 1.4.2) . In particular, the assessment of the Bus Rapid Transport scheme concluded that this scheme would represent low value for money with a Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) of 1.27.

The BCR assessment of 1.27 (low value for money) of the Bus Rapid Transport scheme stated that 'journey time benefits and revenue do not outweigh the significant costs' (see Table 4.2 on page 16 of the report).

3 The GCP Executive Board meeting held on 3 March 2016 (agenda item 12);

The GCP Executive Board at its 3 March 2016 unanimously **agreed to discount from further consideration** as part of the Greater Cambridge City Deal reopening the railway to Haverhill and providing a Busway all the way to Haverhill and **approved** for public consultation the illustrative concepts [1A and 1B, 2A to 2E and 3A to 3D] set out in the report to provide improved Park and Ride linked to Bus Rapid Transit between Fourwentways and Cambridge, and Cycling and Walking measures along the corridor.

In the light of future decisions, it is important to note that the Executive Board in 2016 was prepared to discount **prior to a formal public consultation** an option with a **low value for money Benefit Cost Ratio of 1.27** because the Executive Board did support the Off-Highway Strategy 1 scheme with a then stated benefit to cost ratio of **0.71** in 2021.

4 A1307, Three Campuses to Cambridge: Initial ideas for bus and cycle links. Consultation (ended 1 August 2016)

This **2016** consultation included a question asking 'How far do you support the ideas for new bus links on or near the A1307 from Granta Park to Cambridge Biomedical Campus On Highway and Off Highway {question 9}

Respondents were **not** asked which approach they preferred**, nor** were they asked to rate the approaches one against the other. The consultation responses were analysed by the Cambridgeshire Research Group.

The consultation responses showed that there was more support than opposition for **both** the On Highway approach and for the Off Highway approach but there was a greater level of support for the On Highway approach than for the Off Highway approach.

The Executive Summary of the Consultation Report indicated the level of support for the On Highway Babraham Road Park and Ride to Addenbrooke's CBC bus link and for the On Highway Granta Park to Addenbrooke's CBC bus link, but did not make it clear that these levels of support were higher than for the Off Highway bus link alternatives, nor that opposition to the Off Highway bus links was higher than opposition to the On Highway links.

5 The WSP Parsons Brinckerhoff 2017 Report and the GCP Executive Board meeting held on 8 March 2017 (agenda item 8);

The WSP 2017 Report formed much of the background for agenda item 8 of the **Executive Board** agenda for **its 8 March 2017 meeting**.

This Executive Board meeting was the first to be held following the creation of the LLF.

The Chair of the LLF reported to the EB meeting that '*Considerable disquiet was expressed at the LLF meeting that the agenda papers for the March Joint Assembly and Executive Board meetings had been published less than three hours before the start of the LLF meeting. There was therefore virtually no time for those attending the LLF meeting to read these significant documents prior to the meeting. As many at the meeting were coming across the ideas and proposals for the first time, it was felt to be unrealistic to expect them to be able to give well thought-out views about the recommendations going to the Joint Assembly and Executive Board given their scale and significance. The LLF called for a pause to allow for further work to be done on the details of the proposals'.*

The agenda report stated that a high level assessment of costs and benefits had been carried out and that the early stage indicative assessment has focussed on benefits derived from potential journey time savings to bus users on the corridor, and suggests the package of measures would be likely to offer **a Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) in the range 1.5 - 2.0** (paragraph 7).

The Executive Board took on board the views and concerns of the LLF and a decision was made to delay public consultation to allow development of the options with the LLF.

6 LLF Workshops and the Executive Board meeting held on 22 November 2017 (agenda item 6);

The Chair of the LLF was able to update a subsequent meeting of the Executive Board held on 22 November 2017 on the work of the LLF. 'Five workshops had taken place to develop options for the A1307 Haverhill to Cambridge corridor. The three strategies set out in the officer report to the Executive Board had been developed by the LLF and had been presented at its meeting in September 2017. He explained that all three strategies were identical between Fourwentways and Haverhill. .**The LLF agreed that all three strategies should be consulted on.** He emphasised that this did not mean that LLF members supported all three schemes.'

The agenda report set out the cost implications of each strategy. Strategy 2 and 3 were similar in cost at between £39 million and £47 million. Strategy 1 was circa £145 million, but was more future proof than the other two strategies. The economic benefit of the **£145 million spend** on Strategy 1, was estimated to be **£280-320 million** (paragraph 4.3).

The report also stated that Strategy 1 generated the greatest modal shift and the greatest economic benefits (£280m to £320m) against Strategy 2 (£165m - £180m) and Strategy 3 (£145m - £165m). The benefit cost ratio for Strategy 1 (2.2) was **lower** than for Strategy 2 (3.85) or Strategy 3 (3.75) as although it had the highest economic benefit, it also cost significantly more than the other options (paragraph 4.16)

The report was discussed and debated, with the Executive Board making the following points:

- **Cost/benefit of the strategies and value for money needed to be detailed in the consultation and this made clear for the public to understand.**
- The Vice Chairman expressed **support for leaving the option of light rail open**. He was keen for more people in the area to commute by rail and for the GCP to contribute to the rail study. He had hoped for more commitment from central government to Cambridge South station than had been announced in the Autumn budget statement.
- Mark Reeve (a non-voting member of the EB) supported all three strategies being consulted on provided the Board was reassured that all the options were deliverable. **He questioned the cost/benefit of Strategy 1 and was sceptical of its economic benefit.**
- The Chairman pointed out that one of the advantages of Strategy 1 was that **it was on an old railway line**. He advised that the National Infrastructure report referred to land value capture and suggested that developer contributions could have a part in funding schemes such as this.

These points made by Executive Board members need some comment: This was not the first time that light rail was mentioned in connection with CSET. The cost/benefit of Strategy 1 was challenged. Strategy 1 was only partially along an old railway line, and was dependent on which specific route between Sawston and the Park and Ride site was finally chosen in 2021. There was support for a route along the old railway line - the Shelford Railway Alignment which was brought up later (see section 15).

However, the CSET Strategy 1 route went to the East of Stapleford and the North-East of Great Shelford, whereas the old railway route to Shelford Station ran to the south of Stapleford.

The Executive Board decided to consult on all three strategies.

7 Cambridge South East Transport Study Consultation 9 February to 9 April 2018

The Cambridge South East Transport Study Consultation leaflet **2018** set out details of three strategies (Phase 2) and 17 separate elements (Phase 1) common to all three strategies. The three strategies were:

Strategy 1	Mass Rapid Transport Route;
Strategy 2	Bus lanes along A1307 and public transport links to CBC;
Strategy 3	Bus Lanes along A1307.

Strategy 1 was an off Highway route, with an estimated cost of £130 - £145 million and an economic benefit of £280 - £320 million. **Strategy 2** was On Highway bus lanes along the A1307 and an Off Highway dedicated public transport link between the Babraham Road P&R site and CBC. Its estimated cost was £42 - £46 million and economic benefit of £165 - £180 million. **Strategy 3** was On Highway bus lanes along the A1307. Its estimated cost was £39 - £42 million and economic benefit of £145 - £165 million.

Although figures for the estimated costs and benefits of each of the three strategies were given in the consultation documentation, **no specific BCRs** were given in the consultation document. Using the figures for the range of estimated costs and range of benefits of each strategy given in the consultation documents, a range for the BCR for each strategy can be calculated,

Strategy 1	1.93 – 2.46
Strategy 2	3.58 – 4.28
Strategy 3	3.29 – 4.23

These three calculated ranges are comparable with the more specific figures of 2,2, 3.85 and 3.75 respectively quoted in the agenda papers of the EB's 22 November 2017 meeting.

8 Executive Board meeting 11 October 2018 (agenda item 7)

It was originally intended that 4 July 2018 Executive Board meeting would include a discussion of the responses to the consultation. However, a decision on a strategy approach was deferred to October 2018 due to pause requested in Mayoral Transport Statement

The agenda report to the11 October 2018 meeting included the following:

- the most strongly supported Strategy in consultation is Strategy 1. It is also the most costly option and the one with the greatest environmental impact. However, it generates a significantly higher economic benefit, although alternative strategies have a greater benefit cost ratio.' (para 4.35)
- Strategy 1 was supported by 64% of respondents. Strategy 2 was supported by 54% and Strategy 3 by 52%. In terms of respondents expressing strong support;

43% of respondents (710) expressed strong support for Strategy 1, compared to 18% (298) for Strategy 2 and 20% (321) for Strategy 3. (para 4.36).

- The Local Liaison Forum (LLF) support the proposals for strategy 1. (para 4.37)
- The benefit cost ratios for Strategy 1 are 1.4 (10 year appraisal), 2.5 (20 year appraisal) and 2.3 (30 year appraisal) (paragraph 4.40). (para 4.40)
- Overall [strategy 1] is the solution that provides the greatest transport and economic benefits, and the one best aligned to the proposed CAM. It is also the highest cost solution. (para 5.1)
- On balance the commended Strategy, to be adopted as a preferred strategy, is Strategy 1. However, further work is required to develop this strategy alongside development of CAM. This further work is needed to fully align the proposals, and to assess the environmental impacts. It will confirm the business case for Strategy 1 and incorporate the developing CAM proposals. (para 5.2)

The minutes of the meeting accurately record that the Chairperson of the South East Transport Study Local Liaison Forum (LLF), was invited to speak. He made the following points:

- **The LLF broadly supported the adoption of Strategy 1 as the way forward.**
- **There was some support for not ruling out light rail.**
- **If Strategy 1 could not be taken forward then the LLF would support Strategy 2 or 3 going forward.**

The Executive Board discussed the report and in expressing their support for the proposals noted that the cost benefit of the scheme **[Strategy 1] was good**.

The level of support for each strategy was set out in para 4.36, and full details were given on agenda page 85 (para A.13 in Appendix A). The actual figures are

- 1441 respondents answered the part of the question about Strategy 1 (Off Highway). A total of 1064 (73.8%) supported or strongly supported this Strategy and 377 opposed or strongly opposed it.
- 1278 respondents answered the part of the question about Strategy 2 (mostly On Highway but a section Off Highway). A total of 868 (67.9%) supported or strongly supported this Strategy and 410 opposed or strongly opposed it.
- 1293 respondents answered the part of the question about Strategy 3 (On Highway). A total of 834 (64.5%) supported or strongly supported this Strategy and 459 opposed or strongly opposed it.

The figures actually show that **each of the three** strategies was supported in that there was a greater level of support than opposition to each strategy, with almost two-thirds supporting even the least supported strategy. It would also be fair to say that there was a higher level of support for the Off Highway Strategy than for each of the other two strategies. No strategy had more opposition than support.

The consultation response is not out of line with the views of the LLF. **The LLF's view was nuanced** : broad support for Strategy 1 but if this strategy could not be taken forward for whatever reason, then strategies 2 or 3 would be supported.

Whilst the Executive Board thought that the cost benefit of the scheme was good there was no mention of the fact that the other two strategies had a much higher benefit cost ratio. The figures in the table in paragraph 4.40 for Strategy 1 should be set alongside the relevant figures for the other two strategies; these figures were given in Appendix B: Business Case of the Report. A high level BCR for Strategy 2 was given as **2.3 to 4.2** (para 8.118 in Appendix B: Business Case of the Report, agenda page number 62)

and for Strategy 3 **2.0 to 3.7** (para 8.119 in Appendix B: Business Case, agenda page 62). The BCR figures stated were therefore considerably higher for strategies 2 and 3 than for Strategy 1.

9 Executive Board meeting held on 27 June 2019 (agenda item 10);

The agenda report covered the progress on delivering Phase 1 works and the further work undertaken on identifying potential route alignments and travel hub locations for the Cambridge South East Transport Scheme.

In relation to Phase 2 of the CSET proposals, the agenda papers set out three potential sites for a Travel Hub in the Fourwentways area and five potential route alignments.

The Chair of the LLF attended this meeting to report on the outcome of the LLF workshop held on 7th May 2019 and the public LLF meeting held on 4th June 2019, The minuted record is a very brief record of what was actually said.

In particular, the LLF Chair's report made reference to

- *An **alternative route** following the disused railway to Great Shelford Station which was raised at the LLF Workshop on 7 May and again at the LLF meeting on 4 June*
- *An alternative Travel Hub (Park and Ride) site suggested at the LLF Workshop on 7 May and again at the LLF meeting on 4 June. This suggestion is referred to in paragraphs 7.31 and 7.32 of today's agenda papers and refers to the area round and near the old Fourwentways roundabout. –*

He also made the point that there was *concern that there was no indication of how the shortlisted routes and location of Park and Ride sites linked into the longer-term ambition for a public transport route to be extended to Haverhill.*

In discussing the report and the route options detailed within it, the Executive Board praised the work carried out by the LLF and expressed strong support and encouragement for its continued involvement in the scheme and noted that the main variations between the various options were based upon the alternative proposed sites of the potential travel hub.

10 CSET LLF meeting held on 1 June 2020

There was a full agenda for the CSET LLF I June 2020 meeting. Much of the meeting was taken up by aspects of Phase 1 of the CSET programme. This was followed by a slide presentation covering three short-listed travel hub locations and five shortlisted travel routes for a travel hub to be situated close to Fourwentways.

The slides gave information about Benefit Cost ratios for each of the alternative route alignments: The information is set out in the table below.

route alignment	BCR
Purple	0.81
Pink	0.64

Brown	0.71
Black	0.54
Blue	0.58

Subsequent slides gave the following information, which did not appear in the agenda papers for the following Executive Board meeting.

The recommended preferred route alignment was the Brown route, and a subsequent slide detailed an adjusted Benefit Cost Ration for this preferred route:

Conventional transport benefits	£60.6 million
Wider economic benefits	£9.2 million
Total PVB	£69.8 million
Present value of cost	£85.7 million
Adjusted BCR	**0.81**

A subsequent slide gave total capital infrastructure costs (£ million) for the preferred option.

construction	68.7
design	9.5
project management	12.6
environmental mitigation	2.9
statutory undertakings	12.5
land cost	11.5
inflation	12.2
TOTAL	129.9

This presentation was given towards the end of a lengthy LLF meeting that was beginning to overrun. The only comment in the meeting about this presentation queried the Benefit Cost Ratios and value for money.

11 Executive Board meeting held on 25 June 2020 (agenda item 13)

The agenda report stated that this [transport] programme takes on even greater importance in light of the global Covid-19 pandemic and the likely increase in commuters wanting to access active travel solutions for their daily journey to work. The impact of this on the GCP programme is considered elsewhere on the agenda, but whilst there may well be a short-term impact on the use of public transport, the now more pressing need to get the economy moving again suggests that the case for schemes such as these will be stronger as a result of Covid-19. (para 1.4 of the agenda papers.

The information presented to the 1 June 2020 LLF meeting was included in the agenda report: the BCR information in paragraph 9.21 and the adjusted BCR value in paragraph 14.1.

The project total capital infrastructure cost of the preferred option scheme is £129.9 million (para 14.2) and the Executive Board was recommended to approve a revised budget for the CSET Phase 2 project (para 2.1 (h))

Section 9.23 of the agenda papers stated that: **'All options at present represent a Poor VfM case, based on the DfT appraisal criteria.** However, future work to develop and refine the preferred option will explore the potential to enhance the VfM of the scheme, including further consideration of measures to generate additional patronage and user benefit and of the wider economic benefit of the scheme.'

The minutes of the meeting regarding item 13 record that 'Tony Orgee, Chairperson of the Cambridge South East Transport Local Liaison Forum (LLF), attended the meeting to provide an update on his presentation to the Joint Assembly. He emphasized the request for local communities, representatives and stakeholders to be involved throughout the scheme's development, noting that at the Joint Assembly meeting officers had acknowledged the need for better communication and consultation and that two further meetings had been organised by the GCP. He also suggested that schemes should be put on hold in order to allow business cases to be reconsidered following Covid and argued that alternative route options should not be ruled out yet.'

The minutes of the meeting regarding the LLF Chair's report covered the main points he raised particularly that schemes should be put on hold in order to allow business cases to be reconsidered following Covid and argued that alternative route options should not be ruled out yet.' The minutes could, however, have included reference to the fact that '*There were no adverse comments regarding the recommended location of the Travel Hub'.*

The view in the agenda report about the likely consequences of the Covid pandemic – 'whilst there may well be a short-term impact on the use of public transport, the now more pressing need to get the economy moving again suggests that the case for schemes such as these will be stronger as a result of Covid-19.' – appears to imply that travel to work would increase after Covid to higher levels than pre-Covid. In fact the aftermath of the Covid pandemic lockdowns has been a considerable increase in working from home and therefore reductions in commuting to work.

While discussing the report, the Executive Board:

- Observed the **high level of support that the railway alternative route** had received from local residents and communities. ….. The Transport Director observed that the detailed design stage of the preferred route alignment required design work on a yard by yard basis, which would be impractical to carry out in multiple route options. He noted that all routes had been robustly considered in line with Department of Transport guidelines, and emphasised that the evidence case had been clear in presenting only one preferred solution.
- **Questioned whether the Park and Ride site would be large enough** and whether it would provide sufficient cycle parking and storage space. The Transport Director assured the Executive Board that calculations had projected that the site was large enough. noting that the CPCA had developed plans to complement the scheme by extending it further to the east.
- Clarified that any potential changes to the scheme due to external impacts, such as Covid 19, could be made throughout the development process.

Section 9.23 of the agenda papers: **'All options at present represent a Poor VfM case, based on the DfT appraisal criteria** should have acted as a clear warning signal. However about one year later, despite such warning signals, the Executive Board at its meeting held on 1 July 2021 was asked to agree the submission of a Transport & Works Act application for a scheme with a BCR of 0.71 **and did so**.

12 The CSET EIA consultation 19 October to 14 December 2020;

Whilst the consultation document obviously focused on Environmental Impacts and their assessment, there was also some text (reproduced below in italics) of a more general nature

We have seen changes to traffic patterns as a result of COVID-19. Does this mean that we won't need this project?

The GCP's commitment to support sustainable growth is brought into even sharper focus by the impacts of COVID-19 and a need to support the economy to get back on its feet.

As we emerge from COVID-19 restrictions and communities continue to recover and grow in line with the area's Local Plan, sustainable transport options will be vital to access work, study and other opportunities the city has to offer, whether using public transport or active travel.

The need for active travel and transport interchange solutions are increased in a context of growing cycle use, as people seek alternatives to using public transport during COVID restrictions and recognise the benefits of a healthier lifestyle.

The impact of COVID-19 on public transport demand and the need for social distancing cannot be predicted with certainty. This will be kept under review as the project develops, and the business case will be updated before a decision is made to progress further with the scheme.

A key issue here is about the impact of Covid 19 on public transport demand and the need for social distancing cannot be predicted with certainty, Taken together with the comment in paragraph 1.4 of item 13 of the GCP Executive Board meeting held on 25 June 2020,iIt seems as though the GCP was thinking along the lines of a likely increase in commuting rather than what has subsequently happened with a considerable rise in home working.

In the Chair of the LLF's report to the Executive Board at its 25 June 2020 meeting he had said that 'schemes should be put on hold in order to allow business cases to be reconsidered following Covid' Patterns of work are still emerging changing, for example, the four day working pattern now introduced for staff at local councils.

13 The GCP Executive Board meeting held on 1 July 2021 (agenda item 13);

The report to the Executive Board provided a summary of work carried out on the development of the project since June 2020.

The agenda report referred to the Brown route as the the preferred route alignment though, as part of the EIA consultation, an alternative route between Babraham and Sawston was considered and presented for feedback. (para 4.3)

At the conclusion of the EIA consultation process, the Brown route is still the preferred route alignment being progressed.. (para 4.4)

The report concluded that alternative routes following the railway alignment would have lower benefits and higher costs relative to the shortlisted route alignments. In addition, a number of significant barriers would need to be overcome to enable construction of the route. This evidence supports the conclusions of previous work leading to the rejection of this alternative route. (para 4.7 of the agenda papers)

The minutes of this item state that 'Tony Orgee, Chairperson of the Cambridge South East Transport Local Liaison Forum (LLF), attended the meeting to present feedback from the public meeting held on 7th June 2021. While sharing the concerns that had been expressed at the meeting, Mr Orgee drew attention to issues that had been discussed related to the level of car parking provision at the proposed Travel Hub, the route and route variants, as well as proposed changes following the EIA consultation that had been carried out in 2020.'

These minutes do not do justice to what was actually said by the Chair of the CSET LLF.. A copy of his contribution at the Executive Board meeting was sent to those minuting the meeting.

The LLF Chair's report to the meeting included specific comments on the Pink Route variant and on the Shelford Railway Alignment **but the main points made in the LLF Chair's report to the Executive Board** are set out in red italics below.

2 Route and Route Variants

Two route variants were each separately considered, but some of the discussion, concerns and challenges were of a general nature and applied to either route variant and indeed to the GCP's preferred brown route.

*There was compete surprise that there would be only **1,250 car parking spaces at the proposed new Travel Hub** near the Four Wentways roundabout. It was thought that this 'out-of-the-blue' reduction in car parking spaces at the new Travel Hub was of critical importance. Particular concern was expressed about the reduction in proposed spaces in the light of recent job creation and what is already known about future jobs to be created at the Cambridge Biomedical Campus. Given the number of jobs already in the CBC area and that they will increase by many thousands in the coming years, it was felt to be counter intuitive to reduce the number of parking spaces at the new Travel Hub.*

*Reference was made to the present West Suffolk Local Plan up to 2031, and the fact that work is already underway about the next plan up to 2041. It was questioned whether any account had been taken about **Haverhill's needs** (many people living there commute along the A1307 towards Cambridge) and future growth in Haverhill.*

In response [at the LLF meeting, officers had stated that*] the reduction in the number of car parking spaces was the result of further traffic modelling. The Combined Authority's response to the EIA consultation had stated that 2,000 spaces was too high. The figure of 1,250 was the proposed capacity in the opening year.*

*GCP staff and its consultants were asked how could the GCP progress such an **uneconomic scheme,** a scheme that had a **Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) of 0.71**?*

The BCR figure is given in Appendix 6 (page 676 of today's agenda papers. Surely this is way under what can get approval ? Such a low BCR made it all the more important to see the revised economic model.

*There was a somewhat fractious exchange of views about the BCR, focused on the question: '**How is the BCR affected by the planned reduction in car parking spaces at the Travel Hub ?'** Participants* [at the LLF meeting] *found it difficult, if not impossible, to believe that such a large reduction in the number of car parking spaces from figures quoted previously could have no impact on the value of the BCR.*

At the end of some time spent on this issue, the LLF Chair's very clear impression was that those attending the meeting still remained intensely skeptical, and thought that removing so many car parking spaces could only lower what was already an exceedingly low BCR.

In addition, the point was made that the GCP needed to think strategically about Cambridgeshire's problems rather than in silos, and that a light rail solution would give scaleability, and it was pleasing that the new Mayor is talking holistically.

…

5 Conclusion

*So, **in conclusion**, the LLF questioned whether the Scheme is fit for purpose given the significant reduction in car parking spaces at the Travel Hub, and whether the scheme represented value for money.*

The minutes show that when the Executive Board discussed the report, there was **no** consideration of the BCR issues raised by the LLF.

It was apparent to the LLF Chair at the time of the 7 June 2021 LLF meeting that some members of the LLF had lost confidence in what they were being told by the GCP because of its decision to press ahead with the Preferred route given the low figure now quoted for its BCR (compared with the BCR implied in the 2018 consultation) and the unchanged low value of this figure when a significant change in car parking spaces was made compared to previous information thus presumably reducing the benefits of the scheme.

14 The LLF comes to an end

The Chair of the LLF was informed in 2021 that the LLF was being closed down by the GCP as its work was so far advanced that no further input from the LLF was required, and that the LLF would be replaced by a Community Forum, the South Area Forum.

15 How the LLF's views changed

As indicated in section **8** of this document, at the 11 October 2018 Executive Board meeting the Chair of the LLF did state that the LLF broadly supported Strategy 1. However, it must be borne in mind that **the LLF's views were based on the**

information then available. At that time, the likely benefits of Strategy 1 were stated to be £280 to £320 million and the likely costs £139 to £145 million, giving a range of BCRs from 1.93 to 2.46. By the time of the 25 June 2020 Executive Board meeting the BCR ratio being quoted had come down to 0.71, and this figure was again quoted in the agenda papers for the 1 July 2021 Executive Board meeting.

As stated within Section 13 above It was apparent at the time of the 7 June 2021 LLF meeting that some members of the LLF had lost confidence in what they were being told by the GCP because of its decision to press ahead with the Preferred route given the low figure now quoted for its BCR 0.71 (compared with the BCR implied of about or just over 2 in the 2018 consultation leaflet) and the unchanged low value of this figure when a significant change in car parking spaces was made compared to previous information thus presumably reducing the benefits of the scheme.

By June 2021 there was a general feeling in the LLF that the BCR was so low and the preferred scheme such a poor use of public money that they felt no longer able to support the scheme. In other words, **the LLF had reached a stage where it was broadly felt that Strategy 1 should not be taken forward, and that other schemes should therefore be considered.**

Any claims for support for the off-highway public transport route Strategy 1 are therefore both time-bound and context-bound;