

Public Question Time

No.	Question from:	Question to:	Question:
1.	Mr John Latham, Chairman Hobson's Conduit Trust	Councillor Elisa Meschini, Deputy Leader of the Council, the Council's representative on the Greater Cambridge Partnership	<p>"I am the Chairman of Hobson's Conduit Trust. For four centuries Hobson's Conduit has brought clear, clean spring water from Nine Wells to the centre of Cambridge. This was Cambridge's principal public water supply for 250 years as a joint venture between the Borough and the University. The Conduit still supplies high quality water to the listed Botanic Garden and university College gardens. For two centuries Nine Wells has been jointly owned by the City and the University and is managed as a Local Nature Reserve by the City.</p> <p>Nine Wells is now a vital area of habitat and a treasured community asset. It provides a unique place of tranquility and beauty for the ever-increasing number of local residents, and others who come from further away, and for those who work at Addenbrooke's and on the Biomedical Campus.</p> <p>The Trustees are very concerned about the severe detrimental impact of GCP's proposed CSET off-road bus scheme on Nine Wells, on Hobson's Brook and to their settings.</p> <p>Although we have been assured that the present main pedestrian access route to Nine Wells will be preserved, the mitigation for the scheme currently being offered by GCP is inadequate.</p> <p>The scheme will be visually highly intrusive, enclosing Nine Wells to the west and the north west, and placing a huge concrete bridge over the Brook next to Nine Wells. The bridge deck will create a 15 metre square sterile concrete cavern. Although we have asked for more subtle crash barriers clad in wood, the high embankment as presently proposed will be topped with unsightly metal motorway-style crash barriers.</p> <p>The Trustees remain very concerned about the drainage arrangements proposed, and the risk of road run-off and de-icing salt entering the Brook.</p>

			<p>The previous MP Anthony Browne visited Nine Wells to appreciate the likely impacts of the scheme. His subsequent survey of local residents showed that a large majority of respondents opposed CSET. Local residents would gain little from the scheme.</p> <p>The GCP's proposed off-road bus scheme consists of 5 miles of largely elevated bus road through the green belt, including two very large bridges over the River Granta and its flood plain, and the bridge at Nine Wells. This massive scheme, with its heavy engineering and huge amount of concrete required is completely unnecessary when the alternative is relatively short stretches of bus lane along the A1307. Some of these already exist, and no bridges or elevated sections at all would be needed. The A1307 alternative is what the Trustees of Hobson's Conduit much prefer, not least because it completely avoids Nine Wells, whilst better serving the main destinations.</p> <p>Simply put - the GCP is proposing a really poor route that is colossally expensive, unfunded, unpopular with residents and environmentally wrong. This route will wreck the special nature and setting of Nine Wells, along with the Granta valley and some of the best green belt countryside to the south of Cambridge, including along the foot of the Gog Magogs.</p> <p>Why does GCP persist in pushing for the unpopular, extravagant and environmentally damaging CSET scheme when it costs almost three times as much as the much cheaper, speedier to implement, and much greener alternative route along the A1307?"</p>
	Response from:	Response to:	Response:
	Councillor Elisa Meschini, Deputy Leader of the Council, the Council's representative on the Greater Cambridge Partnership	Mr John Latham, Chairman Hobson's Conduit Trust	To be provided at the meeting.

No.	Question from:	Question to:	Question:
2.	Mr Nick Kirby	Councillor Elisa Meschini, Deputy Leader of the Council, the Council's representative on the Greater Cambridge Partnership	<p>"CBC Ltd is a non profit collaboration between organisations working to realise world leading ambitions in health, education and life sciences on the Cambridge Biomedical Campus. Collectively, our organisations employ over 22,000 people on campus, with 700 apprentices and contribute an estimated £4.2bn GVA to the UK economy.</p> <p>We are advocates for improved public transport to the Campus and across the wider city-region.</p> <p>Please can officers summarise how the costs and benefits of the recommended route compare to other options that have been put forward, including an estimate of the cost of further delay to implementation?"</p>
	Response from:	Response to:	Response:
	Councillor Elisa Meschini, Deputy Leader of the Council, the Council's representative on the Greater Cambridge Partnership	Mr Nick Kirby	To be provided at the meeting.

No.	Question from:	Question to:	Question:
3.	Mr Dan Thorp, Cambridge Ahead	Councillor Elisa Meschini, Deputy Leader of the Council, the Council's representative on the Greater Cambridge Partnership	<p>"On behalf of Cambridge Ahead, an employer membership organisation dedicated to good sustainable and inclusive growth, I would like to ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are clear and evidenced links between public transport provision and quality of life – especially for those on lower incomes. • The evidence is also clear that segregated public transport is more reliable for the user, and more viable for the operator. These issues are felt acutely in Cambridgeshire. • Furthermore, connecting hubs of innovation and healthcare fosters collaboration and accelerates the delivery of new science that directly benefits the health of local people. • There is, therefore, a quality of life imperative as well as a sustainability one for delivering viable and reliable public transport options. • How would the same long-term benefits be pragmatically and financially possible without this scheme?"
	Response from:	Response to:	Response:
	Councillor Elisa Meschini, Deputy Leader of the Council, the Council's representative on the Greater Cambridge Partnership	Mr Dan Thorp Cambridge Ahead	To be provided at the meeting.

No.	Question from:	Question to:	Question:
4.	Mrs Miranda Harper	Councillor Elisa Meschini, Deputy Leader of the Council, the Council's representative on the Greater Cambridge Partnership	<p>“If you approve the CSET off-road bus way it will carve a 14 meter wide swathe through the green belt at a cost of more than £160 million of public funds. Even using the GCP's highly dubious calculations to justify the business case, the Benefit to Cost Ratio is significantly less than 1.</p> <p>Which means that you get less than a pound's economic value for every pound spent. A guaranteed loss. You cannot justify supporting that to local residents.</p> <p>The calculations used by the GCP include the added value to the local land and housing stock of having a busway next door - clearly many houses will be worth less.</p> <p>In contrast, if the GCP's old scheme along the A1307 corridor was built at a cost of £60 million, the BCR increases to about 1.5. While this isn't a great return on investment it does at least mean that the public are getting some value for their taxes.</p> <p>The GCP's scheme doesn't include the cost of carbon or biodiversity net gain requirements that are now law for all private developments.</p> <p>The GCP has admitted that as a result of over engineering and inflation it doesn't have the funds to pursue this outrageously expensive scheme. So why not explore a lower cost option that has the benefit of public support and that doesn't wreck the countryside?</p> <p>The Cambridge Biomedical Campus is continuing to expand along the A1307 and the alternative in road bus lane would include a new spur road that emergency vehicles could use to access A&E more quickly, potentially saving lives.</p> <p>CBC already has a new transport access for travelers coming from the South on the West side of the site with Cambridge South Station. So why build CSET that enters in the same location? As pointed out previously it provides minimal benefit to the local villages. Accessing the Eastern end of the site via the bus road provides a different alternative for anyone travelling from the Southeast, such as Linton & Haverhill where housing is less expensive and many of CBC's key employees live.</p>

			I am asking you NOT to approve the scheme as proposed by GCP. Please will you demand that they reconsider the lower cost option that's better value and which provides a better solution for anyone travelling to CBC from the Southeast?"
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	Councillor Elisa Meschini, Deputy Leader of the Council, the Council's representative on the Greater Cambridge Partnership	Mrs Miranda Harper	To be provided at the meeting.
No.	Question from:	Question to:	Question:
5.	Dr Mike More, Chair of Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	Councillor Elisa Meschini, Deputy Leader of the Council, the Council's representative on the Greater Cambridge Partnership	<p>"Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (CUH) has 13,000 staff and sees over 1 million patients every year, many of whom rely on public transport to get to our hospitals. Over a third of our staff travel to work from the eastern side of Cambridgeshire, Suffolk and North Essex. CUH therefore has a strong interest in the effective and timely delivery of improved public transport, which also supports access to more affordable housing within a reasonable, reliable and affordable commute.</p> <p>Question: Given the substantial and growing need to improve transport connections from the south and east into the Cambridge Biomedical Campus, can officers estimate the improved journey times that will result from the CSET development and the wider health benefits from reducing road traffic?"</p>

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	Councillor Elisa Meschini, Deputy Leader of the Council, the Council's representative on the Greater Cambridge Partnership	Dr Mike More, Chair of Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	To be provided at the meeting.
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6.	Mr Howard Kettel, Vice-Chair of Stapleford Parish Council	Councillor Elisa Meschini, Deputy Leader of the Council, the Council's representative on the Greater Cambridge Partnership	<p>"CSETS has a long history, conceived as the Three Campuses scheme to connect Addenbrookes and the Cambridge Biomedical Campus to Babraham Research Centre and Granta Park. The route proposed was along the A1307 which was very sensible because the A1307 does exactly that with all the existing bus services.</p> <p>However Mayor James Palmer introduced his Cambridge Autonomous Metro scheme (CAM) and because bus lanes along the A1307 did not meet his criteria, the GCP had to opt for the bus road through the countryside and they achieved this at the public consultation by proposing 3 routes, 2 along the A1307 and a single offroad route through the green belt. 60% of the votes were for the two routes alongside the A1307 and the offroad route votes were 40%. So by cleverly splitting the vote the GCP appeared to achieve public consensus for construction of a new bus road through the green belt.</p> <p>In 2021 the new Mayor dropped the CAM, but GCP having spent years and significant public money progressing the scheme, rather than acknowledging this imperative didn't exist, ploughed on.</p> <p>Instead, a new justification "To serve the villages" was found. But the route passes outside of each of Babraham, Sawston, Stapleford and Shelford, in all cases more than 1 mile away from the centre of the village. The offroad route also bisects the retirement village and country park on the edge of Stapleford that is under construction.</p>

			<p>There is significant local support for an inbound (to Cambridge) bus lane along the A1307 which has almost all of the benefits of the offroad scheme at a cost saving of more than £100million pounds!</p> <p>This route doesn't require a Transport & Works Act order and the cost and delay of a public inquiry, so work could begin immediately. In 2 years it would be complete and each stage would bring immediate benefits, unlike the off-road guided busway, which provides no benefits until every section is completed, which will take at least another 5 years and massive destruction of our precious green belt.</p> <p>In private discussions several local decision-makers share our concerns that the wrong scheme is being pursued.</p> <p>Everything has changed since 2018 but this choice hasn't. Will councillors consider the alternative that achieves similar benefits, more directly connects the campuses with bus services, can be achieved years quicker, doesn't threaten the loss of 5 miles of green belt and costs £100m less?"</p>
	Response from:	Response to:	Response:
	Councillor Elisa Meschini, Deputy Leader of the Council, the Council's representative on the Greater Cambridge Partnership	Mr Howard Kettel, Vice-Chair of Stapleford Parish Council	To be provided at the meeting.

No.	Question from:	Question to:	Question:
7.	Ms Araminta Ledger Managing Director, Cambridge University Health Partners	Councillor Elisa Meschini, Deputy Leader of the Council, the Council's representative on the Greater Cambridge Partnership	<p>"The members of Cambridge University Health Partners are Anglia Ruskin University, The University of Cambridge, Cambridge University Hospitals, Royal Papworth Hospital and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust. The organisation works to maintain Cambridge as a place where breakthrough scientific discoveries are made, rapidly demonstrated in real world populations and where excellent care is delivered alongside economic growth in order to improve health. We know from our work that safe, reliable, fast public transport options (including walking and cycling) that link places of employment to homes is crucial to our ability to attract and retain talent.</p> <p>Please can officers provide assurance that the process for consulting the public on route options has been compliant with mandated process and reflects best practice; that county council members have been part of decision making on behalf of the county council during the preparation of this proposal by The Greater Cambridge Partnership; and how the proposals align with the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority's strategic transport plan?"</p>
	Response from:	Response to:	Response:
	Councillor Elisa Meschini, Deputy Leader of the Council, the Council's representative on the Greater Cambridge Partnership	Ms Araminta Ledger, Managing Director, Cambridge University Health Partners	To be provided at the meeting.

No.	Question from:	Question to:	Question:
8.	Mr Orestis Tzortzoglou	Councillor Elisa Meschini, Deputy Leader of the Council, the Council's representative on the Greater Cambridge Partnership	“When Mott McDonald undertook their original study and consultation we explored the option for some of the buses arriving at the A11 hub continuing onto Granta Park (provided an appropriate solution could be accommodated) to ensure a seamless journey, particularly for those travelling for work during peak hours. One can appreciate that during winter months/bad weather etc having to walk or cycle that extra half a mile (crossing the A11 bridge can be a challenge) may not help optimize usage of the mode. This is also relevant for DDA compliance. Could officers confirm whether services could run on from the travel hub to Granta Park?”
	Response from:	Response to:	Response:
	Councillor Elisa Meschini, Deputy Leader of the Council, the Council's representative on the Greater Cambridge Partnership	Mr Orestis Tzortzoglou	To be provided at the meeting.
No.	Question from:	Question to:	Question:
9.	Mr Richard Stephen Partridge-Hicks	Councillor Elisa Meschini, Deputy Leader of the Council, the Council's representative on the Greater Cambridge Partnership	<p>“The real problem that CSET should be trying to solve is to provide a long-term transport solution from the Southeast, from Haverhill and Linton via Granta Park, to CBC where many of their key workers live.</p> <p>However, the GCP's modelling makes it clear that the buses don't have the capacity required to provide transport on the scale required to service the whole corridor to Haverhill. Railfuture's recent consultants report "A big role for a Haverhill Railway" showed how strong this demand is, with a railway able to attract over 2,000 people from</p>

			<p>Haverhill, perhaps double, in the peak alone. The buses wouldn't have the capacity for these numbers, although in reality they wouldn't achieve this level of modal shift in the first place leaving a continuing legacy of cars and congestion.</p> <p>The only solution is a rail link to preserve the hub and spoke nature of Cambridge and the outer villages. And there is a route that is available - the old Cambridge to Haverhill railway line. It exists and can be reinstated with only a small number of changes.</p> <p>However, if you build CSET it will make reopening the railway much more difficult, as it uses some of the same route and will also undermine the economics.</p> <p>There has been some discussion in the press from Councillor Meschini about the cost - she quotes £800m although we have no idea where that figure came from.</p> <p>She also says the proposed route from Haverhill is a spur so not of interest to the rail industry. This is deliberately misleading. The ends of the London tube lines don't connect to heavy rail. The ends of the DLR don't connect to heavy rail. The Manchester Tram is the same. They all connect to national railways at the centre of their routes.</p> <p>While heavy rail is possible, there are alternatives which are less expensive - tram-trains and light rail. Light rail could link to a limited underground system, to preserve the special nature of Cambridge's historic centre, and provide a better, high capacity, long term solution that is truly future proof. If you have any vision for Cambridge's future this is the answer!</p> <p>Will you send this poorly conceived CSET scheme to the dustbin of history where it belongs?"</p>
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	Councillor Elisa Meschini, Deputy Leader of the Council, the Council's representative on the Greater Cambridge Partnership	Mr Richard Stephen Partridge-Hicks	To be provided at the meeting.
No.	Question from:	Question to:	Question:
10.	Ms Annabel Sykes	Councillor Alex Beckett, Chair of Highways and Transport Committee	<p>"I am pleased to note that Cllr Beckett asked at the 17 July East West Rail Main Line Partnership meeting whether East West Railway Company Limited ("EWRCo") could publish a map showing where its Land Interest Questionnaires had been sent, although it appears that nothing has happened as a result.</p> <p>At the same meeting it was confirmed that the new Government had not decided whether the project will go ahead. Despite this, EWRCo's agents, Ardent, are pressuring land owners who may be impacted to agree to intrusive surveys. They are threatening them with statutory powers of entry under section 172 Housing and Planning Act 2016. This section provides "a person authorised in writing by an acquiring authority may enter and survey or value land in connection with a proposal to acquire an interest in or a right over land." Let's assume that EWRCo is potentially an acquiring authority. At this stage in the process there doesn't seem to be a "proposal". EWRCo has said that the maps released to Cambridge Approaches under FOI requests are out-of-date, but it hasn't yet launched a statutory consultation with up-to-date maps. EWRCo has also indicated that its next consultation will be non-statutory. It is very unclear when there will be a proposal for section 172 purposes an EWRCo appears to be taking advantage of this uncertainty. It is also understood to be the case that Ardent are reluctant to provide information on potential land take to landowners in advance of meetings.</p> <p>What can the County Council do to assist affected landowners?"</p>

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	Councillor Alex Beckett, Chair of Highways and Transport Committee	Ms Annabel Sykes	To be provided at the meeting.