Supporting Information/Evidence

Bus services from new developments need to be of sufficiently high quality for bus travel to be a genuine option and realistic alternative to the car for residents of new developments

The existence of the physical infrastructure for a segregated high quality public transport corridor (busway or similar) does not of itself ensure bus travel is a genuine option and alternative to car travel for residents of new developments. There must also be high quality bus routes and bus services on the segregated public transport corridor. A new busway is of little use if the services on it are infrequent and do not run when they are needed.

Services must operate seven days a week, with long operating hours. Many employees in Greater Cambridge do not work from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday. Many clinicians and other employees at the hospitals on the Cambridge Biomedical Campus, for example, work shifts at weekends as well as on weekdays that start before 9am and end after 5pm

As explained by Jarrett Walker (international public transport consultant), in order to attract large numbers of passengers (i.e. function as a genuine alternative to the car), services need to be high frequency if they are to be attractive to residents (in particular residents who also own cars).

- When frequency is high, waiting for the bus is reduced, which is the least attractive part of the trip for passengers
- When frequency is high, passengers can more easily connect from and onto other services
- “Frequency is a backstop for reliability”. If a bus doesn’t arrive, when a service is high frequency, this isn’t so much of a problem, because another one will arrive soon.

It is generally accepted that bus services need to have frequencies of at least every 15 minutes or better to be considered high quality (Jarrett Walker, Human Transit). This is sometimes referred to as a ‘turn up and go’ frequency.

Bus services from new developments need to be in place from first occupation of a site for sites to achieve the necessary public transport mode shares

When people move to a new location, their daily routines are disrupted, creating a brief window where they are highly open to adopting new transportation habits (Verplanken et al, (2008), Journal of Environmental Psychology 28(2):121-127). If a reliable bus service is not available immediately, residents are more likely to invest in private vehicles, map out driving routes, and establish deeply ingrained driving habits that are incredibly difficult to break later on.

Franchising will be implemented shortly, giving the Combined Authority the ability to determine routes and frequencies

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority intends to have implemented bus franchising across Greater Cambridge by 2030. This will replace the current system, in

which 88% of bus mileage in the region is operated on a commercial basis, with bus operators deciding which routes and what service patterns they operate on a for-profit basis. . With franchising in place, the Combined Authority's transport team will have control over the quality of bus services in the region, as it will be responsible for determining bus routes and service patterns. This creates a new opportunity for a Local Plan to require particular bus service patterns (operating days and hours and service frequencies), as the local transport authority which includes the Greater Cambridge councils will be responsible for determining them.

The region's funding shortfall for buses means that high quality bus provision cannot be assumed

Bus services cannot typically be supported by the revenue from fare-paying passengers alone; it is unusual to find any public transport network operating without public funds (Leon Daniels OBE, appearance at CPCA Transport Committee, 17.6.26). The difference between revenue and cost of bus services in London, for example, is about £1 billion a year (Leon Daniels OBE, appearance at CPCA Transport Committee, 17.6.26).

[Leon Daniels OBE, in response to Cambridgeshire County Cllr Alex Beckett]: "*Maybe I can give you a good example from Professor David Begg, who calculated for London that the shortfall between revenue and cost was roughly equivalent to the cost of congestion. That is to say, if you removed the congestion, you would do what 9,000 buses currently do, with about 5,000 buses*" (CPCA Transport Committee, 17 June 2026. Webcast available here Leon Daniels speaks and answers questions from around 2hr 55 min).

It is therefore to be expected that Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (the Local Transport Authority for Greater Cambridge) will need to provide financial support for the bus routes and services required for the new developments set out in the Local Plan. While developer contributions might support services on a temporary basis, they are usually used to support routes for 3 to 5 years, although sometimes up to 10 years.

Funding is already insufficient for the current bus network, let alone an expanded one. Around 88% of bus mileage is currently run on a commercial basis; and approximately 12% of services are subsidised by Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority. As of November 2025, The Combined Authority was having to draw on its reserves to fund the subsidised services, as its expenditure on them was greater than the funding available:

> "*The passenger transport service is reliant on draw-downs from reserve in both the current and next financial year, this indicates that the current suite of interventions is not affordable in the long-term*." (Agenda pack for Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority's Transport Committee, 17 Nov 2025, p58)

A recent report to CPCA's Transport Committee also predicted that unless solutions are found to close the funding gap that exists for buses, the bus network across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough could contract further by more than a third by 2035 (Independent Review of Implementation Pathways for Bus Franchising). All this points to the fact that Policy I/ST Sustainable Transport and Connectivity must require high quality bus routes and services

from new developments (and the Plan as a whole must identify deliverable measures to support them financially as set out in one of our other representations).

The Local Plan and accompanying Greater Cambridge Transport Strategy do not define what is meant by high quality public transport

The phrase 'high quality public transport' is used frequently in the Local Plan,for example in Policy S/CBC:

> "*The Campus will also grow to form a vibrant and sustainable area of Cambridge, capitalising on its highly accessible location….Further development will deliver high-quality buildings, spaces and infrastructure, including a range of on-site services and facilities, that reflect both its international importance and its strong connections to the wider city and subregion by walking, cycling and* ***high quality public transport.***"

The Plan does not define what this phrase means, however. r Specifically, the Local Plan's glossary lacks any entries for: high quality public transport, high quality bus network, high quality bus service or high quality public transport provision.

There is also no definition of these phrases or this concept in the Greater Cambridge Transport Strategy, which accompanies the Local Plan. This is a significant omission and backsliding on the previous 2014 Transport Strategy for Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire, which included a definition for 'High Quality Public Transport Service' (see p4-2).

The Transport Evidence Report defines High Quality Public Transport

The Local Plan's Transport Evidence Report (TER) provides this definition:

> *HQPT: High Quality Public Transport. Used to refer to a bus service with a frequency of six or more buses per hour, or a rail route with four or more trains per hour (Transport Evidence Report Parts 1-3, October 2021; p xiii)*

The Cambourne to Cambridge busway is referred to as "the Cambourne to Cambridge HQPT scheme" in 3.4.30. The Waterbeach to Cambridge Busway is referred to as 'The Waterbeach to Cambridge HQPT scheme' in 3.3.34. CSET Phase 2 is referred to as 'CSETS (Cambridge South East Transport Study) HQPT scheme' in 3.4.43. This suggests frequencies of services of six or more buses per hour on these busways are envisaged in the TER.

The Local Plan's Sustainable Transport Policy (I/ST) does not require bus services to be high quality

Policy (I/ST) neither includes a requirement that bus services have frequencies of every 15 minutes or better, nor that they operate seven days a week with long operating hours. The supporting text to the Policy I/ST does mention bus frequency, but the description is too vague to guarantee frequencies of every 15 minutes or better on major routes:

"*In the context of Greater Cambridge, public transport provision would be considered high quality where it is demonstrably accessible, affordable, reliable, safe, and frequent, in line with the aims of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority's Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (2023); whilst reflecting that a high quality offer will be location- and context-dependent and that each proposal will require a realistic, tailored approach*."

Policy (I/ST) currently does not require users to be provided with a genuine choice of modes from first occupation of development. It merely requires that sustainable and active travel patterns are promoted from the first occupation of development:

> 1. *Development must be designed through a vision-led approach which reflects the road user hierarchy, to: promote sustainable and active travel patterns from the first occupation of development; and provide users with a genuine choice of modes appropriate to the location and uses proposed.*

The City of York Local Plan sets precedents

There is a precedent for including wording in a policy to require developers to ensure the provision of high frequency bus services to/from new developments from first occupation of a site and for a sustained period. The City of York Local Plan contains the following in its Policy T1: Sustainable Access:

> *Where development is to be supported by frequent high quality public transport linking them to York City Centre or other key destinations, developers will be required to ensure the provision of such new services or enhanced existing services, as necessary, from first occupation of the development for a period of up to 10 years, or five years after last occupation, whichever comes sooner.* City of York Adopted Local Plan, 2025, p297)

There is a precedent for defining what a high frequency bus service is in a Local Plan glossary. The City of York Local Plan includes a definition of high frequency bus services as follows in its glossary:

"*High Frequency Bus Service: a bus service operating every 15 minutes (or more frequently) during the Monday to Friday daytime*" (City of York Adopted Local Plan, 2025, p365).