

**REPRESENTATIONS OF HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL (HCC)  
GROWTH & INFRASTRUCTURE UNIT**

**ON BEHALF OF HCC (excluding HCC Property)**

**IN RELATION TO THE**

**GREATER CAMBRIDGE PARTNERSHIP REGULATION 18 LOCAL PLAN  
CONSULTATION**

**FEBRUARY 2020**



## **1. Introduction**

This representation is made by Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) Growth & Infrastructure Unit, in relation to the Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) Local Plan Regulation 18 Consultation. The comments within this representation reflect the interests of the following services that are provided by HCC, along with other relevant areas within the Environment & Infrastructure Department (excluding HCC Property):.

- Children's Services (School Place Planning)
- Highways & Transport (HCC as Highways Authority and Network & Travel Planning)

## **2. Highways and Transport**

The Highways Authority aims to provide a safe, efficient and resilient transport system that serves the needs of businesses and residents across Hertfordshire whilst minimising impact on the environment. Hertfordshire County Council adopted Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) 2018 – 2031 which sets out the long-term transport strategy for the County to accommodate the levels of housing and employment growth being identified by the District Councils in their emerging Local Plans.

LTP4 will provide a framework to guide all our future transport planning and investment. It highlights both existing and future transport problems and issues and identifies ways we can deal with them. LTP4 accelerates the transition from a previous transport strategy that was largely car based to a more balanced approach which caters for all forms of transport and seeks to encourage a switch from the private car to sustainable transport (e.g. walking, cycling and passenger transport) wherever possible.

The Highways Authority therefore support the proposed mitigation strategy within the local plan to promote patterns of development that enable travel by low carbon modes such as walking, cycling and public transport and discouraging communities from using private cars.

## Relationship between Greater Cambridge and Hertfordshire Networks



**Figure 2**  
Map showing the  
extent of Greater  
Cambridge

Greater Cambridgeshire is well served by strategic north-south road links, notably the M11, A10 and A1 to the west, and east-west links in the form of the A505 and A11. These networks provide strategic routes in/out/through Hertfordshire. In addition, these links also form key local routes. Parts of this network are already heavily trafficked, in particular the A1(M) and A10 heading south towards London and M25 which are subject to peak time congestion.

There are 20 rail stations in Greater Cambridgeshire with 14 providing links to London. These routes provide connections to Hertfordshire including Letchworth, Hitchin, Stevenage, Bishops Stortford, Broxbourne heading south on the Hertfordshire network to London.

The county council strongly supports proposals to locate growth to maximise opportunities to travel by walking cycling and public transport.

Currently there is no direct bus services providing connectivity East-West along the A505 from Royston to the Greater Cambridge area. As services along the A10 corridor are also limited, there is the risk that new development in these areas could be car centric and therefore work against the desired theme of net zero carbon.

Cycling routes will need to be considered in relation to potential growth locations. The Melbourn Greenway which the Greater Cambridge Partnership carried out a public consultation on in 2019 is a key potential route which could provide cycle connectivity

to potential growth in the southern part of the area. HCC provided a supportive response to this scheme to provide connectivity to Royston-Melbourn-Harston-Cambridge therefore opening up travel opportunities for cyclists, walkers and equestrians. There is currently no safe route for walking and cycling but with the draw of Melbourn Science Park and Royston employment/schools this route, along with a bridge across the A10/A505, will offer residents access to employment opportunities and for employers to recruit more widely. Any development in this area should seek to link into this route where possible.

The A10/A505 bridge will complete the missing link in the Melbourn Greenway and overcome a main point of severance in the Royston to Melbourn section of the Cambridge to Royston A10 cycleway. People are unlikely to choose to walk and cycle more unless the network and facilities are in place so that it feels easy and safe for them to do so, which is in line with LTP4.

### A505 Corridor

The A505 Corridor is a strategic west-east corridor that stretches from Leighton Buzzard in the west to the south of Cambridge in the east. The corridor lies across numerous local authority administrative boundaries including Central Bedfordshire, Luton Borough, North Hertfordshire District and South Cambridgeshire District.

The A505 is facing pressures but is also a potential opportunity. The corridor is facing high levels of housing and employment growth which has the potential to significantly affect how the corridor's transport system will function and perform in the future. It needs to be viewed more broadly beyond the dominant A505 highway route for private vehicles and consider routes for pedestrians, cyclists, local bus services and links to stations to provide non car options for journeys.

HCC (in conjunction with North Herts District Council, Luton Borough Council and Central Beds Council) has commissioned work on an A505 corridor strategy. Cross boundary issues will be considered as part of this work and we welcome the opportunity for involvement in the Cambridgeshire A505 Granta Park to Royston Strategy development. The outcomes of both strategies should be taken account of in the ongoing development of the Local Plan.

Interventions need to be planned in line with growth in a manner to ensure a more innovative approaches to infrastructure is taken to support sustainable growth within the corridor. There is a need to provide robust objectives for the future vision of the corridor including; considering defining an appropriate hierarchy, the benefits of new technology and enabling the facilitation of modal shift.

During the current Local Plan period, the housing figures expected to be delivered around Baldock and Royston is approximately 5,000 dwellings. It is also likely this corridor is going to be a focus for growth beyond the current Local Plan period.

## Other Comments

Moving forward there are opportunities to develop a multi modal approach towards sustainable transport. Furthermore, there does not appear to be a strategic level approach to modal shift which will need to be considered. The county council are also concerned at a site level with regard to the potential for mode shift to be hampered by the investment into increasing the capacity of the highway network. There should be accessibility by all modes of transport and consideration must be given to securing the right balance.

From experience of working with other Local Planning Authorities on the development of their Plans, a key requirement in the development of any Plan is the need for a transport strategy which sets out the principles and strategy of how the plan intends to mitigate the impacts of growth. This will in effect set the framework for developing interventions.

Mitigating some of the consequences of growth is likely to be particularly challenging in the Greater Cambridgeshire area, and cannot be solved solely through capacity driven highway infrastructure improvements. Consideration needs to be given to increasing sustainable connectivity to key destinations/employment areas, reducing traffic congestion, improving air quality, providing infrastructure and promoting sustainable corridors e.g. bus priority, high quality walking and cycle routes. Alongside the relevant sustainable transport infrastructure, the strengthening of policies in the Local Plan which promote sustainable modes and create a foundation for change in travel behaviour will be a necessity. Policies should encourage and enable shorter journeys to be made by sustainable means, including by walking and cycling, given the wider community benefits of active travel.

Development options that provide opportunities to link to existing sustainable transport infrastructure are strongly supported. The previously adopted Local Plan had 35% of development being located in rural areas. The county council is concerned that continuing such a development strategy would lead to more car centric developments due to a lack of alternative transport choice. If development is identified in such locations these should maximise opportunities to link to existing /proposed bus and rail services and cycle infrastructure.

It is considered that the options involving densification or development along public transport corridors present the greatest opportunity to develop truly sustainable communities which offer real transport choice.

The county council agrees that the proposed East West Rail route should influence future growth locations and that the Local Plan should reflect the latest route proposals.

### Next steps

HCC welcomes the opportunity to work with Greater Cambridgeshire Council over the next few months on infrastructure and transport implications from the proposed developments on the Hertfordshire Highway and Passenger Transport network.

### **3. Children's Services (School Place Planning)**

There is currently some pupil outflow from Royston to Cambridgeshire, particularly at upper level, although there isn't much inflow from Cambridgeshire into Royston. With the amalgamation of the two middle schools and the upper school in Royston into King James Academy, this could mean the outflow may decrease in years to come, but there is no evidence of this to date as it is only a recent amalgamation.

There are over 1000 new homes proposed in Royston and HCC have an education strategy to meet this long-term demand. Any potential new housing at Bassingbourn Barracks (mentioned as a possible development site by the National Infrastructure Commission study work carried out in 2016/2017), or indeed in the vicinity of Royston but within Cambridgeshire, would be expected by HCC to include new primary and secondary education provision within the development. There is insufficient expansion capacity within Royston to accommodate demand from new housing outside of the town.