

42 Devonshire Rd
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To: Mayor Dr Nik Johnson
Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority

11 August 2021

Dear Mayor,

We welcome the news that you are establishing an Active Travel Forum. We are also excited at the prospect of the Local Transport Plan being renewed. We would like to offer the following suggestions to ensure that both will make the greatest possible positive difference to people's health, wellbeing and economic opportunities, by effectively promoting the Three Zeros on carbon emissions, air pollution and road deaths. We would be very happy to meet with you or your officers to develop these thoughts further.

You may be aware that Cambridgeshire County Council has very recently invited cycling groups to help inform an "Active Travel Strategy". Obviously, this needs to be connected with the Combined Authority's initiative on active travel.

Pedestrians

We are concerned that the reference to a "Cycling Tsar" and "cycling groups" in your [statement of 6 August](#) implies a lesser representation of the interests of pedestrians. "Active travel" of course encompasses both walking and cycling. It is vital that the interests of pedestrians, including those with disabilities, are championed at the highest level.

The draft revised Highway Code places pedestrians at the top of the mobility hierarchy. Yet it is pedestrians whose interests are least well promoted and most frequently compromised: for instance, vehicles parking on pavements; busy footways being converted to shared-use; illegal cycling and e-scooter on pavements not being enforced; utility companies installing junction boxes or EV charging terminals on pavements; local authorities allowing pavements to become cluttered with A-boards, bins, and fly-parked cycles and e-scooters; or lack of funding for maintenance of pavements and footpaths leading to their becoming hazardous.

Integrated transport

We are also concerned that singling out cycling to have a public-champion risks perpetuating the greatest problem in transport planning and policy: a lack of integration. Every trip is multi-modal (e.g. cycle → bus → walk, or car → walk). Walking, cycling and e-scooter are necessary complements to public transport for trips over a few miles, and therefore should be promoted together. For instance, every railway station, travel hub and most bus stops should have safe, direct, well-maintained walking and cycling paths spreading out into the surrounding

area, along with secure cycle parking (in addition to clear signage, accurate information, shelter, lighting, etc.)

It is only by making multi-modal travel convenient and safe that we can offer a viable alternative to driving for a large proportion of trips, not just those that are easy to walk or cycle in their entirety.

In recognising the need for an integrated approach, Chris Boardman, who was originally appointed as the *Cycling and Walking* Commissioner for Greater Manchester, is now the region's *Transport* Commissioner. We urge Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to take the same approach, and appoint an active travel specialist with a vision and mandate to help deliver an *integrated* transport network.

Authority to make a difference

It is unclear from the [6 August statement](#) what status the Active Travel Forum will have. The implication is that it will be populated with councillors and a few co-opted volunteers from cycling groups. We recommend starting with the terms of reference: what difference is the forum intended to achieve? That will more clearly determine the most appropriate make-up of the forum.

The reference to “nominations” for an independent Cycling Tsar implies that position too will be voluntary, as a salaried position would be recruited in accordance with public sector policies. It also implies the position will be part-time.

If the so-called Tsar and Active Travel Forum are to make a meaningful difference, they must have a clear remit, responsibilities, targets and a budget to deliver – be that research and reports, public engagement and communication, or review and oversight of active travel schemes. The tsar will need to be independent, accountable, scrupulously impartial, and represent the entire region. It is hard to see how that would be possible if the tsar were also employed by a campaign group or transport consultancy. How small would the pool of candidates be who could commit to working full-time as a volunteer?

It goes without saying that the Forum must promote the needs of the full spectrum of society. Therefore, in-depth and regular training of its members will be essential, to ensure they are fully cognisant of the needs of women, children and people with reduced mobility or sensory impairments; and au fait with latest design guidance for active travel infrastructure and amenities.

Local Transport Plan

The 28 July Board report, [Future Transport Strategy and One CAM Limited](#) states in §2.10, “The refreshed [Local Transport Plan or LTP] strategy is being developed to a timetable that envisages public consultation in the Autumn.” This sounds ominously like another “What do you think of this?” consultation being prepared for September, where a large draft document is released alongside a survey.

At most, 0.16% of the population of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough had any say in the current LTP (as reported in the [Consultation Report](#)). There was no proactive involvement of a representative cross-section of communities across the region, and certainly no co-creation.

Deliberative democratic methods, led by specialist professionals, should form part of the evidence-gathering phase. That is the only way to ensure representative input from 'hard to reach' and marginalised social groups. The Greater Cambridge Partnership pioneered this with a [Citizens' Assembly](#) in 2019. This approach will be necessary (though not sufficient) for the next LTP to gain a broad mandate for change at the scale and pace required to address the climate, ecological and public health crises equitably.

We appreciate there may be a practical need for a rapid refresh of the LTP, if only to replace references to CAM and incorporate priorities that differ from your predecessor's. However, we urge the Combined Authority to apply the Three Cs (Compassion, Cooperation and Community) to the development of a new Local Transport Plan that is ambitious on the Three Zeros (carbon emissions, air pollution and road deaths) and incorporates the ideas, needs and hopes of people across the whole region.

Signed by:

Edward Leigh, Leader, Smarter Cambridge Transport

Robin Heydon, Chair, Camcycle

Matthew Barber, Chair, Peterborough Cycle Forum

Sean McSweeney, Chair, Ely Cycling Campaign

Gabriel Bienzobas, Leader, Milton Cycling Campaign

David Stoughton, Chair, Living Streets Cambridge

Richard Wood, Secretary, Cambridge Area Bus Users

Peter Wakefield, Vice Chair, Railfuture East Anglia

John Seton, Secretary, CTC Cambridge

Diane FitzMaurice, 20's Plenty for Cambridgeshire

Carly Leonard, Chief Executive, PECT

James Littlewood, Chief Executive, Cambridge Past, Present and Future

Helen Dye, Organiser, St Ives EcoAction

Rod Hart, Extinction Rebellion Ely

Ian Rawls, Local Group Coordinator, Cambridge Friends of the Earth

Brenda Kent, Local Group Coordinator, Fenland and West Norfolk Friends of the Earth

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Climate Action Coalition