
Cambridgeshire Stakeholder Workshop

Shire Hall

21 November 2007

Workshop transcript (Final)

Introduction

Participants were welcomed by Andrew Acland, one of two facilitators from Dialogue by Design, an independent organisation, who ran the workshop. He talked through the context for the workshop (increasing congestion in Cambridge which is expected to get worse as a further 48,000 homes are due to be built over the next twelve years) followed by the agenda, purposes and groundrules for the workshop.

Agenda

- 6.15 Welcome and introductions
- 6.30 Dealing with congestion
 - Proposals and constraints
 - Focussing on solutions
 - Plenary review
 - Way forward
- 9.30 End

Purposes

- To explore possible solutions to congestion
- For the County Council to listen
- To help inform the County's transport strategy

Ground rules

- Facilitators roles – independent
- Solutions focus to the discussions
- No attribution
- Recording – please keep a check on this
- How results will be used (to feed back to Councillors)
- Please switch mobiles off

Session 1: Dealing with congestion

Participants were seated in groups of 3 to 6 around small tables. Each table was given a set of post-it notes and a pen. The facilitators asked them to have a discussion around each table and to come up with possible solutions to Cambridge's growing congestion problem (it was clarified that the area in question was Cambridge city and the surrounding roads that fed into this, but not outlying villages). Participants were asked to write each of their ideas onto post it notes (one idea per note). After 10 minutes discussion at tables, the facilitator led a plenary discussion gathering up the points that had been generated. All of these were recorded on flip charts at the front of the room. In some cases, where ideas seemed linked or similar, they were gathered together under one heading. At the end of the session, these ideas were grouped under six overall headings. For simplicity, we have presented the ideas here under the headings that were subsequently allocated to them.

Public transport (buses, trains, other rail)

- Link park and ride systems up
- Better and cheaper public transport
- Make park and ride free of charge
- More park and ride
- Underground system
- Better nodes for changing public transport
- Improve public transport – especially from villages
- Create a tram system
- More park and rides
- Move railway station out of Cambridge (so don't get commuters coming into town to get to train station)
- Light rail system
- Increase car parking at outlying stations
- Smaller and more frequent buses
- More regular buses to outlying areas – wider network of routes
- Use existing bus lanes more efficiently
- Bus lanes are interrupted at intersections – would help if bus lane ran continuously (e.g. on new market road)
- Need school buses (because congestion less a problem out of term time)
- Integrated travel systems
- Haulage onto trains
- Bus lanes should be on outside lane
- South east guided bus on old railway to Haverhill
- Old railway line as dedicated route
- Hop on/hop off bus ticket
- Community based school transport system
- Kids 'n' ride

Demand management (congestion charging, parking charges, bollards, boundary controls)

- Using congestion charge might mean that service providers increase fees – some people would need exemption?
- Identify congestion hot spots and particular times
- Don't see why taxis should be exempt from congestion charging
- People become used to the charge and just continue
- Congestion charging becomes a tax on business

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- Tax on parking – would give incentive to site where people can easily access
 - Exemptions to congestion charges damage leisure users – should be across the board
 - Need carrots as well as sticks
 - Congestion charging (in term time?)

Traffic management

- Controlling flow of traffic
 - Traffic management plan
 - Stop cross boundary movements
- More car parks – cheaper!
- Large car parks within walking distance of centre
- Ban cars in Cambridge
- Limit speeds on some roads
- Less traffic management in some areas?
- Learn about traffic management from other cities
- Car sharing
- Special fast lanes for more than a certain number of passengers
- Stagger working hours

Improving walking and cycling

- Make cycling easier
- Improve walking/cycling routes
- Segregate cycling (cycle routes)
- Cycle flyovers
- Incentivise walking by improving safety (street lights/visible policing)

Reducing need to travel

- No more houses!
 - Stop building houses in inappropriate places
 - Don't build north stone or any other houses
 - Develop Waterbeach not Margate airport
- More council houses for the low waged in the centre of town
- Decentralise facilities so people don't have to travel into the centre of town
- Reduce the need to travel
 - Incentives to live near work by moving work out
 - Means testing
 - Don't allow any new industry or business
 - Home working
 - Encourage business to set up near the development areas
- Focus development along radial routes and thus focus bus routes that way
 - New settlement and development on transport radials
- Encourage other work arrangements? (home working)

Improve roads and junctions

Session 2: Proposals and constraints

Paul Cook from Cambridgeshire County Council (Head of Service, Transport Policy and Strategy) gave a 15-minute presentation about Cambridgeshire County Council's thoughts on congestion management and responding to some of the suggestions put forward in the earlier session. After his presentation, participants had an opportunity to ask him questions or make comments on his presentation. This is a record of the question and comment session.

Questions/Comments

- Computer companies also employ people on low wages – won't be able to support a congestion charge
 - But working on having affordable houses so these workers should not need to drive in
 - But what is affordable?!
 - Hope to have better alternatives in terms of public transport for these people
- Congestion charging is not a foregone conclusion – it will be a County Council decision
 - Has been put across in some areas as a panacea but can only work where congestion has reached a certain level and where there are decent alternatives
 - Options for Cambridge are congestion charge or banning cars or some other draconian parking system
- Will there be concessions for electric cars in the congestion charge?
 - This could be considered
- Congestion has increased in the last 18 months
 - The increase in petrol prices has not put people off
 - Does demonstrate that congestion charging alone would not be enough
- Better alternatives alone have not worked elsewhere (in Europe)
- At the moment – alternatives are not as good as the car (because people still use their cars) – have to improve alternatives
- Normally use money from congestion charging to improve alternatives and this is not available immediately - in this case, because County Council are bidding for money from government, they will have this money up front to make improvements.
- Need to re-educate people to the real cost of using their vehicles
- Low emission cars – can only be afforded by the better off
- Cambridge will come to a halt if the transport system is not looked at seriously – in light of increased housing
- Public transport should be clean, secure and safe
- Congestion charging revenue will have to be used for transport purposes (by law)
- In London - all of the revenue goes on admin (because their cameras are not good and because residents get a 90% reduction which does not cover the costs of running the system)
- Will villages off the main radials benefit from better public transport?
 - As currently proposed (although this could change) they will have bigger park and ride spaces, but not buses from village to village
- If congestion charging ends at 9.30am – will there be a rush of vehicles to beat the 10am bollards?
 - From experience in other cities this doesn't seem to be a problem
- Why are the science parks and other business parks in the charging zone?
 - Public transport will be better
 - Many travel to there from Cambridge
- Are there any lessons from other cities about how to change people's habits?
 - Best chance to do this is when people move house – can make public transport more attractive
- Demographics – only affects those who have no choice (if wealthy – won't be a problem to pay). To do it by leaving congestion in place so people are affected by journey time – would need to completely segregate public transport which is not simple

- Not looked at an underground system – looked at one tunnel but the cost was prohibitive – would be huge for the whole of Cambridge

Session 3: Focussing on solutions

In this session, each table was given one of the headings from session 1 and asked to think about it more detail and to answer a series of questions on it. Participants were given the opportunity to go to whichever table they were most interested in and to contribute their ideas. They were free to move tables in the middle of the session if they so wished.

At the end of the session, the sheets generated by each table were gathered up and have been transcribed here.

In some cases, some participants wrote comments on additional blank sheets. Where these comments were relevant to the topic being discussed, they have been included below.

In this workshop, no participants chose to discuss traffic management.

Comments

Idea 1: Improve roads and junctions

Question 1 *What do you need to know about this idea to be able to decide if it will be an effective solution to congestion in Cambridge?*

- How much money is available?
- Where is the money coming from?
- Better traffic management less traffic lights more roundabouts.
- What are current and forecast commuter traffic flows into city along main entry roads?

Question 2 *What uncertainties/barriers need to be resolved in order to implement this solution?*

(These participants crossed out this heading)

- Consider elevated roads
- Dedicated routes (e.g. disused rail tracks) for public transport would improve public transport and roads
- Better public transport lanes on roads (including bus lanes in the middle of the road flowing inward in the morning and outward in the evening)

Question 3 *What would need to be got right in order for this solution to work?*

- Competent management of projects, financial and technical
- More logistical scheduling of major route repairs/maintenance
- More hatching on roundabouts/lights/junctions
- CCTV activity
- Survey of Addenbrookes – Babraham - Abington - Linton - Haverhill disused rail track for engineering feasibility and other similar disused rail routes
- Clear designation of public transport, priority and rigorous enforcement.

Question 4 *Do you have any further comments you would like to add?*

- Enlarge 'no go' areas in city centre
- Rising bollards
- Peak traffic flow control – priority inflow am and outflow pm

Additional comments:

- Most public sector projects go disastrously over budget – the council is very ? at major infrastructure projects – what will happen when the projects goes over budget so the transport benefits are not delivered.

Idea 2: Demand Management

Question 1 What do you need to know about this idea to be able to decide if it will be an effective solution to congestion in Cambridge?

- What impact on businesses, salaries go up
- Costs go up: inflation absorbs charges
- More expensive, high streets full of Starbucks, big corporations, no independent businesses
- What is the collection mechanism process – is it fair?

Question 3 What would need to be got right in order for this solution to work?

- Get exemptions right
- Get administration right – don't make same mistakes as London!

Question 4 Do you have any further comments you would like to add?

- Bollard system should be scrapped when congestion charge is introduced.

Idea 3: Public Transport

Question 1 What do you need to know about this idea to be able to decide if it will be an effective solution to congestion in Cambridge?

- How committed are the County Council to public transport
- Current defects
- Experience of cities with existing integrated public transport
- Commitment to education and changing habitual choices

Question 2 What uncertainties/barriers need to be resolved in order to implement this solution?

- Conflict of interest with car users
- Information/education on public transport options
- Current congestion problems
- Planning/regulatory support
- Efficiency of journey times – need to be consistent
- Need to be reliable journey times

Question 3 What would need to be got right in order for this solution to work?

- Frequency of services
- Ticketing, option to have multimode tickets
- Coordinated transport systems
 - Easy use of different modes of travel
- Choice of interchanges
- Reliable options for journeys
 - Into Cambridge
 - Out of Cambridge
 - Within Cambridge
- Strict priority for public transport

- Plan for the future/build for the future e.g. more parking spaces now at park and ride sites

Question 4 Do you have any further comments you would like to add?

- Needs to be made more attractive, clean, no smoking
- Nee to be able to switch between foot/cycle and bus/train – inadequate cycle racks at present

Idea 4: Walking/Cycling

Question 4 Do you have any further comments you would like to add?

- Make facilities for cyclists storage and facilities at work place for personal storage and personal care etc

Additional comments:

- Crossing points with vehicles
 - Time to cross for frail etc
 - Double crossings
- Segregation of pedestrians from both cyclists and traffic
- Pedestrian areas – ‘priority’?
 - Some vehicles are still allowed in to pedestrian areas
- Open up pedestrian areas to taxis for specific purposes e.g. disabled access
- Priority at pedestrian crossings – less time of light change – wait: otherwise perception is that pedestrians/cyclists are less important than cars. Also dangerous for those that lost patience and won’t wait.
- Safety for cyclists/pedestrians
- Lighting: at junctions especially needs to be more effective
- Headlights – all vans to have headlights on, even during the day
- Speed limits: lower
- Policing: more police on bicycles essentials
More police about at night
More interaction with pedestrians/cycling
- Footbridges: increased bridges over roads so can cross at all times. Debated....
- Parking on pavements. Pavements should be for pedestrians. Full stop. Also garbage.
- Minimum pavement widths. Too think for disabled/blind. Obstructions.
- Evaluate pedestrian/cycle crossings: see what perception is of changes: for example:
Remove all street furniture
Different timing
Direct crossings, not islands

Idea 5: Reducing the need to travel

Additional comments:

- Car pools – 5 mothers or fathers X 5 days to collect and deliver children (NB insurance problem)
- Tell employees of business in town – no cars

Session 4: Plenary review

This was a plenary session in which participants had the opportunity to share any highlights or revelations that they had had during session 3's discussions.

Comments

- An idea about priority – e.g. prioritising pedestrians/cyclists/buses above cars – affects perception also
- Car pools especially for schools (voluntary)
 - But there is an insurance issue that would need to be looked into
- Task the businesses with reducing their traffic by 10% - many businesses are doing a lot to reduce cars – can only go so far
 - Incentives through business rates
 - Incentivising a change – e.g. in US providing showers/locker facilities etc
 - WBCSD sustainable mobility paper
- What about other forms of motorised transport? – motorcycles, scooters/electric bicycles
- Freight on trains and decentralise

Session 5: The way forward

Paul Cook quickly explained to participants how the information generated in this workshop would be used (fed back to Councillors as part of the overall consultation process). He encouraged people to fill in the online questionnaire or to attend one of the roadshows if they had any additional comments.

Participants were then given an opportunity for any last words or thoughts.

Comments

- Would be good to have a contact for afterthoughts – use Louise's email address
- Format – too much time on generalities – would like a more specific focus and more practice cal examples
- More of the context – city of Cambridge is a city of residents not just business
- Would be good to have specific responses to specific suggestions

Additional Comments

Blank A4 sheets were circulated during the workshop and participants were encourage to use them to record any further thoughts that they had on the process or content of the workshop. What follows are the additional comments that did not fit into any other part of the write up.

- More consideration to be given to Cambridge City Residents to be able to use their cars during the congestion charge periods.
- The context of the City of Cambridge as a city of residents and the housing growth envisaged. The housing will need infrastructure.
- City of Cambridge boundary – no private cars, but provide low emission vehicles like a car share/ small cars.
- I would like to see for the future the best system put in place for now and future, if an underground system is the best solution, then we should get the financing and put in place the solution not recurring charges every five years and construct problems.

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- Task businesses with achieving a percentage reduction in journeys undertaken by their staff and congestion charge on shortfall
 - Change negative perception of home working – may only be viable for ‘payment by result’ occupations
 - Public transport – optimise fares for group / family travel
 - Optimise stops for journeys
 - Dissociate ticket purchase from entering bus (e.g. buy ticket @ machine/shop)
 - Encourage ‘personal’ motorised transport – mopeds, scooters etc
 - Remove public service vehicles from road during peak times
 - There might be a way to create a powerful technical solution like:
 - A very small underground or overground but elevated tube system
 - An elevated personal rapid transit which is an automatic transport system that just like cars does not stop on way points but goes from A to B non-stop
 - If the school run makes such a huge difference, make it not all owed to drive your children to school and introduce compulsory school buses.