



**CAMBRIDGESHIRE  
& PETERBOROUGH**  
COMBINED AUTHORITY

# **FENLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL**

## **WISBECH LINK UPDATE**

**Tuesday 1 October**

**Teams Meeting**

# AGENDA

- Update on CPCA position
  - Technical
- Network Rail report
- Discussion
- Next Steps



# FENLAND DISTRICT: TRANSPORT



## LOCAL TRANSPORT AND CONNECTIVITY PLAN



### LOCAL TRANSPORT FENLAND



#### Productivity

Giving both employers and people the means to achieve more of their potential, making them more efficient and more innovative to create more prosperity



#### Connectivity

People and communities are brought closer together, giving more opportunities for work, education, leisure and pleasure



#### Climate

Successfully and fairly reducing emissions to Net Zero by 2050



#### Environment

Protecting and improving our green spaces and improving nature with a well-planned and good quality transport network.



#### Health

Improved health and wellbeing enabled through better connectivity, greater access to healthier journeys and lifestyles and delivering stronger, fairer, more resilient communities.



#### Safety

To prevent all harm by reducing risk and enabling people to use the transport system with confidence.

# IMPORTANCE OF A LINK

- **Wisbech is a vital town in the Fenland area.**
- **Transport connectivity challenges within the Fens – reliance on buses and long car journeys.**
- **Wisbech is growing fast, and with improved connectivity it will increase opportunities and future jobs.**

# NETWORK RAIL REPORT UPDATE



# NEXT STEPS

- Discuss with partners (likelihood of success)
- Future of W2M (agreement on direction of travel)
- Options Development
- Discussion at Transport and Infrastructure Committee
- Feed into MTFP process (budget setting)



# DISCUSSION & QUESTIONS





# Wisbech to March Multi-Modal Options Study





# Wisbech to March – Development Background

The Four Modal Options that have been considered are:

- **Option 1: Provision of a heavy rail system** - This provides a conventional heavy rail solution between March and Wisbech station. A fixed connection to the mainline at March provides access to existing heavy rail depot facilities and rail maintenance vehicle access only.
- **Option 2: Provision of a Tram Train (hybrid heavy/light rail) system** - This provides a Tram Train solution between March and Wisbech station. There is an option for a fixed connection to the mainline at March for access for rail maintenance vehicles only.
- **Option 3: Provision of a tram (light rail) system** - This provides a light rail solution between March and Wisbech station. There is no passenger service connection to the mainline railway. There is space north of March station for the provision of a depot and other support facilities.
- **Option 4: Provision of a very light rail (VLR) system** - This provides a very light rail solution between March and Wisbech station. There is no passenger service connection to the mainline railway. There is space north of March station for the provision of a depot and other support facilities.

All options facilitate a rail shuttle service for passengers between March and Wisbech based on two trains per hour in each direction supported by a single track with a passing loop (double track) midway along the line with onward connectivity to mainline services via an interchange at March. There is space available to the north of March station for provision of support facilities including stabling provision, crew offices and a new depot facility if required.



## Overview of Modal Options Comparison Cost Advice & BCR

Modal Option	Key Considerations	Cost Advice Range AFC (Based on 1Q 2024)	BCR (Core Results)	Unassured cost estimates sensitivity test	BCR (using unassured costs)
Option 1 - Provision of Heavy Rail System	Delivers a service between March and Wisbech. Provides opportunity for future connection to the main line, should capacity become available. There are significant risks with the highways interfaces such as at the A47 crossing that require mitigation by complex, high-cost infrastructure.	£189-230m	0.10	189-230m	0.10
Option 2 – Provision of Tram/Train (Hybrid Heavy Rail/Light Rail) System	Delivers a service between March and Wisbech. Provides opportunity for future connection to the main line, should capacity become available. Plus, the potential for an on-street section to Wisbech's Horsefair bus station. The cost-effective management of the rail / highway interfaces is enabled by the application of light rail operating principles which minimises infrastructure requirements.	£147-179m	0.18	£122-148m	0.22
Option 3 – Provision of Light Rail System	Delivers a service between March and Wisbech only. Plus, the potential for an on-street section to Wisbech's Horsefair bus station. The cost-effective management of the rail / highway interfaces is enabled by the application of light rail operating principles which minimises infrastructure requirements.	£149-182m	0.19	£108-132m	0.23
Option 4 – Provision of Very Light Rail System	Delivers a service between March and Wisbech only. Utilising the lowest cost infrastructure and rolling stock solution of all the options. The cost-effective management of the rail / highway interfaces is enabled by the application of light rail operating principles which minimises infrastructure requirements. The comparative low start-up and operating costs of this option may be an opportunity to establish demand in the shortest time scale.	£142-173m	0.22	£105-129m	0.27

**The DfT BCR aspiration for most RYR projects is 1.0. The BCR is only part of the Business Case we also need to consider the strategic case and wider economic benefits.**



## Potential next steps:

Consideration could be given to:

- A workshop of Specialists and Stakeholders
- Powers and Consents
- Medworth CHP Energy from Waste facility
- Local Development Plans
- Engaging with potential VLR suppliers
- Transport Study to inform economic decision making on the most appropriate solution. Some questions for thought are:
  - *The impact of road congestion around Wisbech on “real” car journey times to key destinations (taking account of car travel at different time of the day) ,*
  - *What proportion of people travel to / from Wisbech by bus?*
  - *What are the real journey times to key regional and longer distance destinations by bus , again taking account of road congestion?*
  - *What are the housing development plans that will enable the rail market to grow?*

If a decision is made to proceed:

- ✓ Depot Provision
- ✓ Asset Condition Survey