**Willingham misses out in multi-million pound bus network proposal for Greater Cambridge – make your views known**

The Greater Cambridge Partnership is running a survey on its proposals for “major improvements to our bus network through more frequent, more reliable services”, which actually leave Willingham worse off. We urge residents to complete the survey, available at [www.greatercambridge.org.uk/making-connections-2021](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMDAsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMTExMDguNDg1MzA0NDEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwOi8vd3d3LmdyZWF0ZXJjYW1icmlkZ2Uub3JnLnVrL21ha2luZy1jb25uZWN0aW9ucy0yMDIxP3V0bV9tZWRpdW09ZW1haWwmdXRtX3NvdXJjZT1nb3ZkZWxpdmVyeSJ9.7308fMCjyCol8UjX2qttzeYBD_hvXboqrGfrsyKPYrY/s/1803907472/br/118575178170-l) before 20 December. The Parish Council has agreed the following statement:

*The grand promises of a radically improved bus network do not appear to apply to Willingham. We are deemed worthy of only a rural hourly bus, on a loop connecting Swavesey, Papworth Everard, Bar Hill, Longstanton and villages in between. We lose our current direct bus service to Cambridge. There are no direct links to any urban centre or Cottenham, or to the sixth form colleges in Cambridge. Cottenham by contrast has a service to Cambridge every 10 minutes, with an express bus once an hour.*

*Willingham is one of the larger villages in South Cambridgeshire with a population approaching 5000, yet the consultant’s report, on which the proposal is based, almost completely disregards it. It is missing from the map showing the existing bus network and from the majority of the maps showing details of the new proposals. It is mentioned only in passing a few times as one of the stops on the rural loop. Willingham deserves better. We propose that to provide an adequate service, buses (say two an hour) are diverted from the Busway, as originally promised, to provide direct links to Cambridge and St Ives. Alternatively, we need a 10 minute feeder service to the Busway.*

The full proposals are set out in the Consultation Brochure available at [www.greatercambridge.org.uk/making-connections-2021](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMDAsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMTExMDguNDg1MzA0NDEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwOi8vd3d3LmdyZWF0ZXJjYW1icmlkZ2Uub3JnLnVrL21ha2luZy1jb25uZWN0aW9ucy0yMDIxP3V0bV9tZWRpdW09ZW1haWwmdXRtX3NvdXJjZT1nb3ZkZWxpdmVyeSJ9.7308fMCjyCol8UjX2qttzeYBD_hvXboqrGfrsyKPYrY/s/1803907472/br/118575178170-l). In his foreword the mayor states that ‘offering everyone in the county better choices for getting about is one of my foremost ambitions’.

The current 5 service is to be replaced by the circular hourly ‘rural’ route shown on the attached map that takes in Bar Hill, Boxworth, Papworth Everard, Fenstanton and Swavesey with no direct bus to Cambridge, and no link to Cottenham. We also lose the direct buses to and from the Cambridge Sixth Form Colleges. No ‘greener travel’ for Willingham residents.

The plans split the region into five areas, and Willingham falls under the **Northstowe, St Ives and Bar Hill corridor**.

The document states that improvements in this corridor would include:

* Between 7 am and 7 pm the following high-frequency services to Cambridge: every 5 mins or less from St Ives, every 10 mins from Huntingdon, every 10 mins from Bar Hill.
* Hourly rural services would include a loop covering villages between Swavesey, Longastanton (sic), Bar Hill and Papworth Everard.
* Lower fares
* Smaller villages will have opportunities to ‘plug into’ this network, whether through a regular connecting bus service, a demand responsive bus service, or access to a travel hub.

There is no mention of Willingham at all!

If we compare this to the **Waterbeach, Ely and Cottenham corridor** we find that their high-frequency services include the following buses to Cambridge: every 15 minutes from Ely (which has a station), every 15 minutes from Waterbeach (which also has a station), and every 10 minutes from Cottenham, including an hourly express. If an aim is reducing pollution and carbon, duplicating a train route with a frequent bus service makes no sense.

So Cottenham will have a 10 minute service direct to Cambridge and Willingham an hourly indirect one, either with a change onto the busway at Longstanton, or change at Bar Hill. The most important destination is Cambridge, so we need a frequent link to the busway.

**We propose that some buses are diverted off the busway to Willingham, as originally promised when the Busway was built. Alternatively a 10 or 15 minute feeder service should be provided.**

There is also mention of services connecting rural areas, and if car journeys are to be reduced there is also a real need for a connection between Willingham and Cottenham, where there is a Village College that serves Willingham.

While the promise of lower fares is welcome, without better access to buses, it is meaningless.

The consultation also asks about how transport improvements should be funded, with three options, with pros and cons set out:

* a pollution-based road use charge
* a flexible road use charge than can be varied at different times of the day
* increased parking charges and a workplace charging levy.

Again, if we do not have access to a good bus service, being charged to drive into Cambridge is extremely unfair.