



The countryside charity
Cambridgeshire
and Peterborough

TIME TO CALL TIME ON GREATER CAMBRIDGE PARTNERSHIP

Countryside campaigners are calling for the abolition of the Greater Cambridge Partnership. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough CPRE say the unelected organisation is out of touch, out of order and out of date.

“The whole concept no longer has a place in today’s world,” said CPRE’s Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Chairman, Dr Alan James. “When it was launched a decade ago, climate change was considerably lower on the public agenda. With the information we have now, it is madness to continue to promote growth. We need to make better use of the resources we already have.”

Dr James says CPRE believes many of GCP’s housing and transport policies are hugely destructive to the countryside. “Their approach to greenways, for example is, where possible, to use existing bridleways. Covering them in tarmac and ruining what little dark sky we have left with lighting, creates a whole new raft of problems. It’s mostly about encouraging cycling, which is no bad thing – but at what cost to the countryside and to farm security? The fundamental character of some of our most cherished villages will be compromised. The residents of Grantchester, a village immortalised by the First World War poet Rupert Brooke, were promised the GCP’s preferred route for the Haslingfield Greenway would not go ahead against their wishes. The vast majority of the village opposed GCP’s chosen route but the Partnership is ploughing ahead by hiding behind a vote of ALL the villages polled.”

The countryside charity says GCP’s approach to busways is equally ill-informed. It says the Cambourne to Cambridge busway duplicates an existing roadway, destroys the historic orchard at Coton and, should East West Rail be built, it will run in parallel. “It’s the same story with the proposals for the busways to Haverhill and Waterbeach,” said Dr James. “They’ll be running in parallel with alternative transport routes and systems, including rail. The Haverhill route will compromise the re-opening of the Colne Valley railway line. What’s the point of all this concrete? GCP have completely failed to recognise that the ever-present threat of climate change presents Cambridgeshire with enormous challenges with water supply, flood risk and food security. GCP are totally out of touch with what people need and what they want – just look at the fiasco over the Cambridge congestion charge.”

CPRE are not the first to call for the abolition of GCP. In March this year, the Conservative leader of the opposition at County Council leader, Steve Count suggested the organisation should be abolished. In the same month the current Chief Executive, Rachel Stopard, announced her forthcoming retirement.

“In our view, time’s up for them,” said Dr James. “Unelected bodies like this have had their day. We will be asking a new Government to abolish them.”