

**CAMBRIDGE ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT AREA JOINT
COMMITTEE 17th January 2005
Agenda Item No. 4(b) CORN EXCHANGE STREET/WHEELER STREET
Statement by James Woodburn on behalf of Cambridge Cycling Campaign**

I am speaking on behalf of Cambridge Cycling Campaign to ask members of this Committee to insist that two-way cycling be permitted in Corn Exchange Street and Wheeler Street. To speak today we needed a petition with fifty signatures. The strength of local opinion on this issue is so great that in two days we were able to obtain some 170 signatures of Cambridge residents and a great many more from people in surrounding areas.

Two-way cycling in Corn Exchange Street (and in Wheeler Street) is essential for access to and egress from the 500-space cycle park to be constructed in the Grand Arcade development alongside Corn Exchange Street. Without two-way cycling in this street cyclists leaving the cycle park and heading for Regent Street and beyond would have to divert via Bene't Street, Trumpington Street and Pembroke Street which I think everyone would agree is unreasonable. We believe that access difficulties could mean that the new cycle park would be very little used.

A great many people – officials of both councils, the developers, councillors and ourselves – have worked hard over the past year to develop a satisfactory design for the contraflow. We strongly support the new design as a basis for going ahead. Some modifications will still be needed and we have suggested a number of improvements that we think could and should be included. The key to success is, we believe, to change the ambience by good design from one in which motor vehicles dominate and have priority to one in which vehicles, cycles and pedestrians interact on equal terms. Speed reduction is an essential element and we favour the introduction of a camera-enforced 20mph speed limit not just in these two streets but more generally in central Cambridge.

We do not accept the controversial conclusions of the latest safety audit. The new designs, particularly if supplemented by the additional measures we propose, would, we believe, create a street that is as safe for all users as other streets in central Cambridge. If the contraflow were to be rejected, the diversions imposed on cyclists might well be less safe than allowing them to use the proposed contraflow.

We consider that the new design for the car park exits is a great improvement. But in practice even the poorly designed existing exits have not proved dangerous for cyclists. Many cyclists cycle across the car exits at present as they are legally entitled to do if they have walked their bicycles along the footway beneath the car park. Yet the safety auditors report no injury accidents involving cyclists either here or anywhere else in Corn Exchange Street or Wheeler Street.

We ask members of this Committee to be robust in asserting the necessity for two-way cycling in Corn Exchange Street and in expressing the view that this Committee is the right place to make the decision. Anxieties about the possibility of litigation should not be allowed to destroy good policies.

I am very willing to answer questions if you have any.