

9th October 2006

Our ref: P06017

Members of the Cambridge
Traffic Management Area Joint
Committee



Cambridge Cycling Campaign

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Dear Councillor,

Cambridge Traffic Management Area Joint Committee meeting, 16th October 2006

We offer our comments on certain of the agenda items for the above meeting.

Agenda Item 3: Gonville Place Pedestrian/Cycle Crossing

We have already commented in a separate letter on the petition which we will be presenting at this meeting and which relates to the Gonville Place pedestrian/cycle crossing. We have been heartened by the many expressions of support we have received over the weekend. We would urge all Councillors to have a look at the quotes – some 10 pages – on our website, which members of the public have sent us.

However there is one additional matter relating to the crossing which we raise here. At the AJC meeting on the 24th April at which this crossing was approved the officer's report stated:

"County and City officers have developed the layout in consultation with the Cambridge Cycling Campaign."

The Signals Team have since confirmed that this statement is incorrect¹. We were not consulted in any way and we regard as damaging to our organisation the claim that we were.

We ask for a clear statement in the minutes of the present meeting that the statement is erroneous.

Agenda Item 4: Traffic Management and Safety Schemes Programme 2007-2008

Paragraph 4, 2006/2007 Programme Update: Gilbert Road

This scheme was carried over from the 2004/2005 programme. In spite of widespread support for the objectives of the scheme, there had been overwhelming opposition to proposed measures for achieving the objectives. Cabinet asked officers to consult to attempt to agree a revised scheme that would meet the objectives.

¹ <http://www.camcycle.org.uk/campaigning/issues/gonvillecrossing/GonvilleCrossingCouncilResponse1.pdf>

We were invited to just one consultation meeting, at which it again became clear that there was virtually unanimous opposition - from local residents, from the representative from Chesterton Community College and from ourselves - to the original scheme but not to the objectives.

Various ideas for a revised scheme were put forward in a highly preliminary way and we have been awaiting a further meeting at which residents, representatives of local schools and others including ourselves would be invited to put forward clearly formulated alternative proposals and to attempt to reconcile these. But neither we nor, we understand, Chesterton Community College have heard anything further since that time. So we are now very surprised to hear that officers claim that consensus cannot be reached.

Now we are told that alternative schemes - involving EITHER mandatory cycle lanes OR traffic calming - have been assessed under the 'October list' criteria, but that the benefits were lower than those expected from the original scheme.

We had suggested an alternative scheme, as described online at:

<http://www.camcycle.org.uk/campaigning/letters/2005/P06003GilbertRoad.pdf>

which involved BOTH traffic calming AND mandatory cycle lanes and we would be truly astonished if the benefits from our proposed scheme were assessable as lower than those in the original scheme.

The officer's report concludes:

"Therefore the original and alternative schemes will be referred back to Cabinet for reassessment as part of the bidding process for the 2007/2008 programme."

We request members of the AJC to ask officers:

- a) To discard the original scheme which is, to the best of our knowledge, strongly opposed by virtually all concerned. In our considered opinion it would be worse than useless.
- b) To ask all concerned to put forward urgently fully formulated alternatives.
- c) To process, advise on and then test these various alternatives against the 'October list' criteria and show publicly how they have been scored.
- d) To seek a reasonable measure of consensus from local councillors, residents, local schools, ourselves and others on those alternatives that score well. We would be more than willing to help in this process.
- e) To submit any resulting high-scoring scheme or schemes to Cabinet in December.

Such a procedure would properly meet Cabinet's requirements. It would be tragic if the only schemes offered to Cabinet were, as now proposed by officers, to be the highly unsatisfactory and generally condemned original scheme or low-scoring alternatives.

Other bids for the 2007/2008 Programme

We ask that such schemes should be cycle friendly and that we should be sent and consulted on preliminary designs as soon as these are prepared. We ask in particular that in any traffic-calming schemes build-outs should be avoided because of the difficulties and dangers these impose on cyclists and that cycle by-passes should be installed at road humps or road cushions used instead.

Agenda Item 5: Core Stage 4: Streetscape Measures for St Andrew's Street and Hobson St

We welcome most of these proposals and at this stage in the process we wish to highlight only our main objection - the damage that the proposals do to essential cycle parking provision in the area

and especially to the cycle parking provision outside the Bradwell's Court development. The result of the officers' proposals will quite simply be bikes left leaning messily and insecurely wherever space can be found.

Our major concern is with the unnecessary and inappropriate proposal to locate a loading and unloading bay, available between 4pm and 10am, here which would greatly reduce the space available for cycle parking.

A loading bay in this location would prevent the developers of the Bradwell's Court site from fulfilling the planning condition imposed on them when planning permission was granted in 2005 to provide "cycle racks to accommodate not less than 52 cycle parking spaces on St Andrew's Street frontage" (see Planning Application ref. C/04/0632/FP, paragraph 24g). This planning condition itself represented a less than sufficient substitution of cycle parking spaces for a far greater number of spaces which should have been provided within the development if the City's Cycle Parking Standards had been enforced for this development. No visitor cycle parking at all is being provided within the development.

If the planning condition were to be relaxed to permit fewer than the stipulated 52 cycle parking spaces along the St Andrews Street frontage (as would be the case if the loading bay were to be approved), this would, in our view, represent a particularly serious breach of the Cycle Parking Standards as set out in the Local Plan. Hardly any of the businesses in this area require an on-street loading bay in this location. All, or almost all, of the businesses on the Bradwell's Court side of the road appear to have rear loading facilities accessed from Emmanuel Street. The new Bradwell's Court development itself will be serviced from Drummer Street. On the Post Office side of the road the very small number of businesses which will have no rear access could be serviced by permitting loading and unloading in the most northerly of the four St Andrew's Street bus stops between 9pm and 7am when bus usage would be low enough to permit this stop to be allocated for loading and unloading purposes. This would have the additional advantage of removing the need to trolley goods across a road with such difficult traffic conditions.

We must again stress that the planned Grand Arcade cycle park accessible from Corn Exchange Street is not going to provide a viable alternative. The spaces to be provided there are far below those required by the Cycle Parking Standards for the Grand Arcade development alone, and they are on the wrong side of the development. In addition changes are now to be made to the Lion Yard which will substantially increase the shopping area there and it is far from clear that proper provision for cycle parking is to be made for these changes. It is essential that the minimum of 52 planned cycle spaces in front of the Bradwell's Court development to which the City planning authorities have publicly committed themselves through the planning process be safeguarded and guaranteed.

Agenda Item 6a: Station Area Access

We greatly welcome the proposal "to add an extra arm to the Hills Road/Brooklands Avenue junction and build a road linking the junction to the route of the guided busway" and the plans for consultation about this link. We request maximum permissible involvement in the design process.

In our formal objection earlier this year to the Planning Application for the Station Area we commented on this important link and asked that mandatory cycle lanes (at least 1.5m wide) should be provided along both sides of this link road and that the carriageway of this link should be of sufficient width (10m) to accommodate these. We also asked for advanced stop lines on the new link at its approach to the junction with Hills Road. We ask now that provision of this sort be included in the initial design work which the report tells us is currently underway.

Turning movements for cyclists at this junction will be difficult and we ask that in the initial design work particular attention be given to the provision of convenient and safe facilities for cyclists to make these turns.

Agenda Item 6b. Milton Road Measures

We are pleased that responses to consultation made by ourselves and others have been presented in some detail in this report. We still think that rather more could and should be done to make the proposed measures more cycle-friendly and ask councillors to use our suggestions to endeavour to add more provision for cycling in this scheme.

Agenda Item 7: LAPE

We strongly welcome this scheme, as we have throughout, and we offer our public support for it. The operation of the scheme seems to be of high quality, and the increased level of effective enforcement against yellow line offences has made cycling easier and safer.

However we have one comment:

In paragraph 1.3 of the report "Protection and enforcement of loading restrictions, bus stops, cycle lanes and traffic lanes" is, quite rightly set out as a key objective. But the present unsatisfactory situation is that illegal parking of vehicles in mandatory cycle lanes can at present only be enforced by the LAPE team in the minority of instances in which the cycle lanes are reinforced by double yellow lines. Enforcement in bus lanes and 'moving vehicle infringements' are an additional problem.

The Traffic Management Bill includes the powers for Parking Attendants to issue penalty notices for such infringements, and several LAs outside London have now had these powers enabled for bus lanes.

Given the number of cycle lanes and the number of cyclists in this area, we consider that the County Council should be working towards a time when Parking Attendants have the power to enforce all these various infringements in Cambridgeshire.

Agenda Item 8a: Cycleways Programme 2007/2008

We greatly welcome this programme but regret that funding limitations have so profoundly constrained what can be done.

Given the fact that the County Council's figures show that nearly as many people come into the city centre by bicycle as come by bus and that provision of better facilities which would attract even more cyclists costs only a tiny proportion of the cost of attracting more people to shift from car to bus travel, we consider that an overwhelming case can be made for funding for a much enhanced cycleways programme.

That said, we would rather see good quality schemes, created over a longer period, than a rash of inadequate schemes which could do harm to the possibility of increasing levels of cycling.

Councillors may be interested to know that recent work commissioned by the Department for Transport on Cost Benefit Analysis for new cycle routes shows levels of returns far higher than those for road schemes - in excess of a staggering 20-1 in many cases. See:

<http://www.ltonline.co.uk/ltxtraarticle.php?uid=4423&v=713&h=932e5a06> and <http://www.sustrans.org.uk/default.asp?slID=1158137684156> .

Madingley Road scheme

On the question of Madingley Road, our members are about to conduct a site visit and we hope to circulate some proposals of our own for this corridor. We will happily send these to AJC members if this would be considered helpful.

Agenda Item 9: Windsor Road

We are disappointed by this report and consider that more should be done to meet the needs of cyclists in this scheme along the lines suggested in our letter of objection which is quoted in the officer's report.

Yours sincerely,
on behalf of Cambridge Cycling Campaign,

James Woodburn