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Your ref:

Traffic Management AJC Councillors



Cambridge Cycling Campaign

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Dear Councillor,

April 2009 AJC meeting

We write to put forward our views on this meeting¹, which we hope will be of interest and use.

Summary:

- We welcome the 20mph zone changes, but believe that the reliance on physical measures is unnecessary. We would like to see widespread use of 20mph zones as is now starting to happen in other cities around the UK.
- We welcome the Cromwell Road changes, including the removal of the cycle lane. The proposed new buffer zone to avoid 'car-dooring', together with the existing 20mph zone, represent best practice.
- We welcome the West Road to Silver Street route proposed, and request consideration of a few small changes that would improve these plans.
- For the Riverside Environmental Improvement Scheme, we welcome the changes and are pleased that officers have amended the proposals following feedback from ourselves and local residents.
- For the Cycling Demonstration Town, we welcome the overall progress. We would welcome reassurance over one paragraph in the report. We are extremely pleased with the Hills Road Bridge plans, which accord with our own views, and hope that Councillors will support these enthusiastically. We propose an additional component to the Hills Road Bridge proposals, and ask to be involved in working up final plans.
- We welcome the proposals for some changes to the implementation of the streets allowing two-way cycling off Mill Road. We make a suggestion for pre-approval of new signage if and when 'No Entry Except Cycles' becomes available, which we feel would attract widespread support.

¹ Agenda and papers via www.camcycle.org.uk/jumpto/ajc2009april

**(4a) Luard Road – Sedley Taylor Road Traffic Calming Measures,
(4b) Canterbury Street Area Traffic Calming Scheme,
(4c) Oxford Road Additional Traffic Calming**

We strongly welcome reductions in speed limits for local streets to 20mph.

We are supporters of the national “20’s Plenty for us” campaign², and wish to see 20mph made the norm for local, residential streets (as distinct from connecting roads). We feel this would be widely supported by many local communities all around Cambridge. 20mph for local streets would not significantly delay motorists, because local streets usually only form a small part of a journey, at the start and end. There are a growing number of towns around the UK making 20mph the default speed limit for local streets.

However, the latest national guidelines for 20mph limits mean that all these sites could be tackled by 20mph signage and a simple Traffic Regulation Order (TRO), rather than physical speed calming. Our concern is that getting more widespread introduction of slower speeds would be expensive and unsightly if areas continually require physical traffic calming.

Despite claims by Cambridge Constabulary, such limits can be enforced. Hampshire Constabulary has already had a batch of enforcement of such limits in Portsmouth, where motorists were offered the alternative of a ‘speed awareness’ course or three points on their licence.

Introduction of area-wide 20mph zones, to make things clear to road users, together with a high-profile campaign of enforcement for a period by the police, would have the effect of gaining compliance.

The design of the current Oxford Road speed bumps are of an early design that is unpleasant to cycle over. We recommend use of humps with a more sinusoidal profile, or flat topped humps.

(4d) Cromwell Road Traffic Calming

Firstly, we wish to note that Officers have acted in an exemplary fashion in terms of seeking views from us; we wish to thank Brian Stinton particularly for this.

We welcome the changes here. Use of 20mph zones, with a buffer zone to prevent ‘car-dooring’ (see below), and no other cycle-specific infrastructure represents best practice for a street such as this.

We have no problem whatsoever with removal of the cycle lane. Cycle lanes should only be used where they confer a direct benefit to cyclists, in particular that they provide sufficient space on the road (2m, 1.5m minimum). The current lane is narrow and provides no benefits. It is almost always better not to provide any cycle lane when only a sub-standard cycle lane could be achieved, or when traffic is already light. Therefore we welcome its removal.

The use of a buffer zone is a much more effective way to improve cycle safety, in that it reduces the chance of ‘car dooring’. (This same problem occurs with the terrible cycle lane outside the Botanic Gardens on Trumpington Road, which we wish to see removed.)

² <http://www.20splentyforus.org.uk/>

(4e) Cycle Route: West Road to Silver Street

We are generally supportive of this proposal, though the path across the green will indeed need to be of a careful design to avoid any suggestion of urbanisation of this area.

Improving this current route would take pressure off the increasingly busy Burrells Walk route. (We still feel, however, that the need to improve Queen's Road, a rather unpleasant route for cycling, will remain after changes at this crossing.)

We believe that the cycle lane on the West Road half of the new arrangement should be red-surfaced. The argument that this would be visually dominant is negated by the large amount of car parking which reduces the quality of the historic views of King's College.

We are disappointed that the opportunity is not being taken to create a (pedestrian-only) pavement on the north side of West Road, in the section until the King's College hostel, although we recognise this would require the removal of a small amount of parking. Once again, the opportunity to improve the pedestrian environment is being overlooked.

We ask that some kind of clear indication is given on the North-West side of the crossing point (at the point where 'Existing footpath' is marked on the map) to make clear that the rest of Queen's Road is a pedestrian-only pavement.

(4f) Riverside Environmental Improvement Scheme

We are pleased that, after pressure from ourselves and the Riverside Area Residents' Association, the plans have been amended by officers to provide a more direct desire line for cycling under the bridge, in what is an area with barely any traffic. This change, from what is shown in **plan 2 to the new plan 1**, has the useful effect also of improving the pedestrian environment under the bridge (in the section nearest the river) as well as avoiding the current blind corner, and enabling a wider pavement, shown at the bottom of the maps.

We met on-site with John Isherwood and wish to thank him and his colleagues for making the change to the plans, which mean that we can now support the specific design (**plan 1**).

At the on-site meeting, one suggestion was for the creation of a specific cycle path under the bridge (in the section not immediately adjacent to the river). We are pleased that officers have dropped that proposal. Such infrastructure would have been unnecessary given that there is almost zero car traffic here (and little usage of the parking), as well as increasing costs.

We specifically ask to receive a copy of the detailed design as it is produced, so that we can be assured that the desire line is being correctly applied. (This has not happened at the Penny Ferry path, where a tremendous amount of money has been wasted on a scheme which could have avoided pedestrian conflict.)

We hope that Councillors will support the suggestion that the Pay & Display bays under the bridge be removed. These bays are rarely ever used, and there is also sufficient (and little-used) parking nearby.

(5) Parking: On-Street Parking Controls: De Freville Avenue Area

We have no views on this proposal, other than to state that, if it were to go ahead, we would expect inclusion of small amounts of cycle parking for residential use, in line with the recently-adopted County Council parking policy.

(6a) Cycling Demonstration Town

We welcome the progress being made on the Cycling Demonstration Town and its focus on quality rather than quantity.

We are a little concerned by paragraph 3.3, which seems to imply that sub-standard compromise could result. The need for land purchase to build an off-road cycle path between Histon & Cottenham has long been known, for instance. We ask for reassurance on this point.

We strongly welcome the tenor of the proposals for Hills Road Bridge and that our hybrid cycle lane proposal is being taken up. These proposals accord with our own views³. Like Officers, we feel that such changes would create national interest amongst the transport community. It would be a best-practice example of roadspace reallocation, and improve things for very many people who currently cycle over what is a very hostile road environment. Also we note that at last, cycle lanes (2.1m wide) that meet national standards (2m) are proposed – which we strongly welcome, and that the proposed benefits for cycling are being pursued in a way which will not harm the pedestrian environment also, unlike so many shared-use schemes.

We ask to be involved in the Hills Road proposals as they are drawn up in more detail. The ends of the bridge will certainly need improvement, but we are confident that a solution can be found.

We have a proposal for creating a join from the new Guided Bus path (which forms part of the Chisholm Trail) to the Bridge, between City House and Hills Road. We hope that Officers will investigate this idea.



³ <http://www.camcycle.org.uk/newsletters/83/article11.html>

(6b) Review of Contra-flow Cycling in Streets off Mill Road

Firstly, we wish to note that we strongly deplore the way in which certain Councillors have perversely turned the issue of allowing cyclists to use these streets in both directions into a political football, even though legal two-way cycling is widespread practice throughout Cambridge and elsewhere.

We feel that debate on this issue should be in the context that any problems at these sites is due to motorists' illegal behaviour due to unfamiliarity with the Highway Code, and that such behaviour should be condemned, rather than attacking the principle of two-way cycling. The idea that these are 'deathtraps' as one Councillor claimed in the Cambridge Evening News, is not backed-up by reality and ignores the fact that nasty stretches of Mill Road can be avoided. We feel that two-way cycling should become the norm, and deplore the previous refusal by Councillors not to allow two-way cycling in the New Town area.

We note that the survey (noted in the Report) which was undertaken by the City Council shows strong support for the principle of two-way cycling in these streets, as well as for improvements in their design to improve motorist compliance. We reject any suggestion that there is widespread concern about two-way cycling here; if this were the case, more than 6, 7 and 12 people respectively (the figures noted in the report) would have bothered to comment adversely on the proposals, which no doubt those councillors opposing two-way cycling would have drawn to their attention.

We proposed a layout⁴ that would enable a proper plug for Mawson Road, and we are disappointed this proposal has not been taken up.

In terms of future changes, we ask Councillors to take a definite resolution at the meeting that, should the DfT allow the use of 'No Entry Except Cycles' in future, the County Council immediately proceed to consult on a TRO to implement such signage. We feel this would avoid the use of a three-month delay by going back to the AJC, and it seems that those in this debate would universally welcome such signage over 'No Motor Vehicles'. We have received an indication that such a change could be imminent, due to pressure increasing from the Cycling Demonstration Towns around the country.

We hope that the changes outlined in the report, together with the potential for future improved signage, will enable Councillors to draw a line under this issue. As we wrote in our Newsletter, "if simple, effective things like this can't be done without all this angst, opposition and effort, we despair of Cambridge ever making any serious progress for cyclists."

We hope the above points are useful, and we welcome any feedback. We are happy to provide clarification on any points if necessary.

Yours sincerely,
on behalf of Cambridge Cycling Campaign,

Martin Lucas-Smith
Co-ordinator

⁴ <http://www.camcycle.org.uk/campaigning/letters/2009/M09005ContraflowSigns.pdf> - see page 3