

April 17, 2007

Our ref: C 07 022

Your ref:

Traffic Management AJC Councillors

Cc: Officers of various reports



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Dear Councillors,

April 2007 AJC meeting

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

Our comments in detail are below, but in summary, changes we request are:

- **St Andrew's Street (item 5a):** A cycle symbol & arrow, at three points, to improve awareness of the cycle contraflow;
- **Core Scheme – Stage 5 (item 5b):** We favour a 20mph limit all along the route. We believe that provision should be made for cyclists as well as pedestrians to cross in the neighbourhood of Parsonage Street, and we feel that the right-turn vehicle lane into the car park should be removed and replaced by cycle lanes along both sides of Maid's Causeway.
- **Speed policy (item 6):** Improvements towards the more progressive approach employed by Hull and other forward-looking local authorities. We urge members to demand that the policy ensures that 20mph zones are introduced in residential areas, and that the limits on what should be quiet rural roads are reduced from the current excessive value of 60mph.
- **Gonville Crossing plans (item 7a):** Improvements to the (otherwise very welcome) plans, particularly the removal of the banned turn, enabling turns off the road, a coloured surface across the crossing and increased crossing time;

4a) Car Parking – On-street parking charges

We still fail to understand why areas like the parking outside the Botanic Gardens, which are on the park & ride route, are being moved to 8-hour stay operation, thus undermining park & ride.

4b) Car Parking – Sunday operations

We welcome the proposal to remove the anomaly of Sunday parking. There are many areas of Cambridge where the number of parked vehicles causes difficulties for cyclists, and attempts to rationalise parking charges and thereby promote use of public transport are to be welcomed.

5a) Core scheme – Stage 4: Streetscape measures, St Andrew's Street

We continue to welcome the Core Scheme as a means to reduce through-traffic in the city centre and thereby promote use of public transport and improve the cycling environment.

¹ Agenda at <http://www.camcycle.org.uk/jumpto/ajc2007april>

Concerning the plans for St Andrew's Street, we feel there is now a reasonable balance between different user groups being proposed, and thus **welcome the revised plans**. Officers have taken on board the feedback of those Councillors who at the October 2006 meeting pressed heavily for cycle parking to be included, to avoid further worsening of the shortage of cycle parking.

(We remind the Committee that the problems of cycle parking outside the Christ's Lane development would not have occurred had development control procedures been adequate to ensure that the development was not, as is now happening, getting away with provision below the requirements of the Cycle Parking Standards.)

We ask the committee to again reaffirm the necessity of retaining the existing pavement cycle parking outside the bank on the corner of St Andrew's Street and Emmanuel Street and also outside the Grand Arcade development.

We think **two enhancements should be included**, and ask that these be included in the plans:

1. Increased enforcement efforts against (i) vehicles illegally cutting through the area and (ii) taxis overranking onto the pavements and bus stops;
2. Increase awareness of the existence of the very useful cycle contraflow. This could be achieved simply by painting onto the ground **a cycle symbol & arrow, at three points** along the street. A subtle measure like this would avoid inappropriate signage.

5b) Core Scheme – Stage 5: Maid's Causeway – Victoria Avenue

We are disappointed by the recommendations which we believe fail to take sufficient account of the safety and convenience of vulnerable road users - pedestrians and cyclists - and of environmental factors in this area of attractive buildings and much-appreciated open commons. This is an area of very heavy pedestrian and cycle movements. The Fair Street crossing probably has one of the highest counts of cyclist usage in the UK. The Officer's report gives no figures for cycle and pedestrian movements except in relation to the proposed new crossing at Parsonage Street. We would like to see proper attention given to the new government guidance on setting local speed limits in which the importance of attention to the needs of vulnerable road users is repeatedly emphasised.

This route falls within the area of the core scheme which is supposed to reduce vehicle movements and to provide better conditions for pedestrians and cyclists. A 20mph zone all along the route would greatly increase the attractions of the route for pedestrians and cyclists who at present are often intimidated by the quantity of motor traffic and its speed. We favour a 20mph limit all along the route with traffic speeds reduced either by cushions and coloured raised crossings or, better still, by average speed cameras. This is, we believe, an ideal site for a first experiment of average speed cameras within Cambridge.

Other issues:

1. We welcome the proposal to limit HGVs from using this route as a through route.
2. We believe that provision should be made for cyclists as well as pedestrians to cross in the neighbourhood of Parsonage Street. The fact that few cross at present is, we believe, no indication of the demand. Rather than cross without a crossing, some cyclists may well be diverting via the Fair Street crossing.
3. Paragraphs 4.4, 5.5 and 5.6. Our observations indicate that few vehicles have to wait before turning right into Fitzroy Lane. We urge the Committee to investigate further whether the right-turn vehicle lane should be removed and replaced by cycle lanes along both sides of Maid's Causeway.

5c) Air quality action plan

The report contains several very welcome points. We welcome the measures concerning taxi registration, the aspiration of a full Core 20mph zone limit, and future consideration of extension of the urban clearway around the whole of the inner ring road, much needed for East Road and Lensfield Road, where parking or stopping causes difficulty and delays to all road users.

6) Review of current speed limit policy

We are disappointed at the lack of vision in this document. In fact it fails even to meet the standards of the DfT document. We are also concerned that the 'Workshop' did not include stakeholders such as ourselves, and that even when adopted as 'Policy' there seems to be no plan to introduce the revised limits except on A & B roads as required by DfT.

Section 3 (page 8) "Key points" of the DfT document says: The underlying aim should be to achieve a 'safe' distribution of speeds which reflects the function of the road and the impacts on the local community. The needs of vulnerable road users must be fully taken into account.

In fact in the DfT document there are no less than twenty-one references to vulnerable road users. The Officer report has only three. Given that Cambridgeshire (and especially Cambridge) has such high levels of cycling we would have expected more positive measures. Excessive speed of motor vehicles is one of the main factors that deters many people from cycling, or allowing their children to cycle. We reported on this issue in our April/May Newsletter². The DfT document is clear that speed management to encourage cycling is needed (paragraph 33).

We believe that this policy revision offers a great opportunity to introduce widespread 20mph areas at little cost, as traffic calming is far less likely to be required. We should adopt the highly successful 20 mph policy developed in Hull³. The policy revision also offers the opportunity to reduce speeds on many rural roads currently used as 'rat runs'.

The old policy (October 2000) on 20mph limits states that the County *may* introduce 20mph limits where appropriate. We are amazed that this is fundamentally unchanged in the new policy and believe the wording should be *will* introduce 20mph limits where appropriate, and that a timescale should be set and money made available.

When the proposed new Safety Camera Partnership is created later this year it will be possible to use the revenue from this source (see Cabinet papers for 17 April 2007 - Road Safety Specific Grant Allocation⁴) for such purposes.

We urge members to demand that the policy ensures that 20mph zones are introduced in residential areas, that the limits on what should be quiet rural roads are reduced from the current excessive value of 60mph and that all existing 40 mph urban speed limits are reduced to 30 mph wherever the numbers of vulnerable road users are above the national average.

The DfT guidance states (in paragraph 13) that since 1997 there has been a commitment to develop a speed management policy that takes account of the contribution of appropriate speeds to environmental and social objectives, as well as to road safety. We see scant recognition of this commitment in the County's draft guidance. We ask that the following phrase be added at the end of proposed policy paragraph 73: "or other schemes designed to enhance urban or residential amenity or environmental standards."

² <http://www.camcycle.org.uk/newsletters/71/article5.html>

³ <http://www.camcycle.org.uk/jumpto/nl71t2000>

⁴ <http://www2.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/db/council2.nsf/c3cf865e3cc1131380256a6b0037e439/c2e554481b6738eb802572b400480d3f?OpenDocument>

7a) Gonville Place – Gresham Road toucan crossing

Firstly, we ask that a misrepresentation of our views be corrected in the minutes. The papers claim that we have proposed separate walking and cycle phases. Our letter⁵ in fact states that such a measure would be “nonsense”. This remains our view.

We are pleased to welcome plans which will restore this crossing, measures which will be welcomed by the thousands of people – both walkers and cyclists – that use it daily. However, we are still heavily disappointed that the plans do not go further. Improvements needed are:

- **Enabling turns off the road** onto the cycle paths (as repeatedly requested by Cllr Rosenstiel)
- **Surface colouring** (or preferably a raised crossing) to highlight the crossing area and differentiate between walking and cycle crossing areas. No reason (except “it cannot be justified at this time”) is given. It is about time that walkers in particular were given more attention at crossings, and surfaced crossing would be a simple way to avoid vehicles blocking it.
- Further **removal of superfluous posts** on the Gresham Rd side.
- We recommend **moving the cycle path** approx 50cm west in Gresham Road and widening the eastern footway by the same amount. The footway is currently too narrow for people to pass, so it is not used. Better to have one good quality pedestrian path, than two unusable paths.
- **Giving more crossing time** to walkers and cyclists. We cannot accept that this would increase delays to traffic, given often solid traffic anyway – vehicles would soon catch up.

We ask Councillors to **address the issue of the turning ban**. The report claims that cycles turning off the crossings into the road would cause problems with pedestrians. Yet, this was not considered a problem with the existing crossing! There are two simple solutions:

- a. Classify the crossing as a “toucan”, while maintaining segregation on approaches and on the crossing. We can see nothing in the regulations to prevent this approach, and there are precedents in Cambridge already (e.g. Queens Rd and Maids Causeway).
- b. Challenge the regulations. We know that people use parallel crossings to turn onto the road, in spite of the displayed bans. People do so perfectly safely, without inconveniencing other road users. We can demonstrate that this is the case by a simple observational study. We repeat our request for the County Council to approach the DfT with a view to carrying out such a study and having the regulations for parallel crossings changed.

8) Highway signing review

We ask that, in order to improve the walking environment, any removal of signage should also result in **rationalisation of poles**, and preferably moving of poles to more sensible locations outside the path of footfall. There are too many examples of obsolete poles littering the pavements of Cambridge.

Yours sincerely,
on behalf of Cambridge Cycling Campaign,

Martin Lucas-Smith,
Co-ordinator

⁵ <http://www.camcycle.org.uk/campaigning/letters/2007/C07021GonvilleCrossingNewPlans.pdf>