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Your ref:

Traffic Management AJC Councillors



Cambridge Cycling Campaign

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Dear Councillors,

July 2007 AJC meeting

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

Firstly, we wish to add a positive note to thank officers for including maps in the online version of the reports. This is of much use to ourselves, and no doubt to other members of the public, for whom the reports now make much more sense, and save the need to collect the paper copies. We very much hope this will continue.

6b) Cambridge Core Area - Stage 5 Measures

We endorse the improved provision for people walking here, through the provision of a new pedestrian crossing. (Incidentally, we would see no need for this to be a cycleable crossing.)

We are disappointed that no attempt is being made to provide a pavement in Fitzroy Lane, a street which currently provides three lanes for traffic. By removing the central bollard, there would be space for a pavement and two traffic lanes, as these pictures show:

<http://www.camcycle.org.uk/map/gallery/27/>.

We strongly welcome the new weight limit proposal, which reduces the number of lorries using the route. Chesterton Road is a more suitable place for such lorries, and is a road provided in places with cycle lanes.

We again ask that the short car park right-turn entry lane on Maid's Causeway be removed, to make space for continuous cycle lanes along Maid's Causeway. The number of motor vehicles turning right into Fitzroy Lane is not sufficient to justify a dedicated right-turn lane. Vehicles turning right would, in the absence of a dedicated lane, be easily able to turn right during gaps in the traffic. Such gaps in the traffic will be more frequent if the proposed zebra crossing (either Option 1 or Option 2) is installed.

¹ Agenda and papers via www.camcycle.org.uk/jumpto/ajc2007july

We urge the Committee to again express its strong support for a 20mph speed limit along Maid's Causeway.

6c) Cambridge Core Area - Wayfinding Initiative

We ask that much-needed new cycle parking locations be provided when unnecessary 'street clutter' is cleared away. We would vigorously oppose removal of any existing cycle parking, which is in tremendously short supply.

Park Street Cycle Park should be included within any new signage, if car park usage is to be 'encouraged'.

Lastly, we note the irony of external consultants from Manchester telling us how to get around in our own city.

7) Parking Policy Review

We ask for implementation of a systematic policy to substantially reduce on-street visitor car parking in central Cambridge now that Park and Ride provision is operating more efficiently.

We strongly welcome the requirement that *"the provision of cycle parking should form part of all parking proposals..."*. This is a long-held policy proposal of the Campaign, and will help start to address the complete lack of cycle parking in some areas as well as the general shortage of dedicated cycle parking everywhere in the city.

On a related matter, we think more generally that the policy should aim towards a gradual reduction of car parking spaces in areas like Romsey and Petersfield, in favour of freeing up space for people walking, and addition of some cycle parking.

Some such areas have virtually zero cycle parking provided (with the result that cycles block pavements and thefts continue – a staggering 10% of overall reported crime in Cambridgeshire is cycle theft) despite these areas being well-suited to car-free living. Also, pedestrians often have to walk in the road because of cars parked all over pavements (a matter which may be in contravention of the Disability Discrimination Act), making such pavements narrower than even the worst-case provision required in the Local Transport Plan.

We also strongly support car clubs as a means to help achieve such a reduction. We will expect cycle parking to be provided within the TRO to enable this.

We are surprised to see no mention of possible increased parking charges for four-wheel-drive and other over-large vehicles which cause difficulties for pedestrians and cyclists when parked in Cambridge's narrow streets. This omission is particularly surprising now that some other local authorities are imposing additional charges on such vehicles.

8a) Cycleways - Cambridge Area Jointly Funded Cycleways Programme 2007/08

We support the deferment of the Madingley Road cycle improvements. We are keen to see a properly-done scheme, rather than an unsatisfactory one done 'on the cheap'.

We will reserve most of our comment on the other schemes until full details are available. We will press to ensure that cyclists do not have to give way at sideroads in any scheme which comes forward.

We note that a Toucan crossing across King's Hedges Road is to be provided as part of the proposed Northfield Avenue scheme. Given the serious issues that have arisen in the recent past over cycling provision in this area, we ask to be fully consulted at the earliest possible stage about the design of the crossing in this difficult location.

We strongly support the principle of widening and lighting the New Bit path which forms part of National Cycle Network Route 11. The path is at present so narrow that unnecessary conflict is created between cyclists and pedestrians. Moving and widening the cattle grid at the junction of the path with Trumpington Road would also be a welcome and much needed improvement. We look forward to seeing and commenting on the detailed designs.

8b) Cycleways - Chesterton Road Pelican Crossing Update

We find the report's criticism of the Campaign by the Signals Team highly objectionable. The report states that we did not initially object to the width of the cycle lanes. This is because such information was never provided to us – which it should have been, given that the initial 1.2m later proposed falls below national recommendations.

On discovering the inadequate 1.2m width, we requested a 2m lane. The engineers agreed to provide a wider lane, but only to 1.5m instead, a clear demonstration that the initial 1.2m was arbitrarily chosen.. In government guidance 1.5m is specified as merely a *minimum acceptable* width, and we consider that this is insufficient in this location.. 2m is the recommended width specified in a large number of pieces of guidance²; there is absolutely no legitimate reason for not applying it in a road 11m wide.

We would like to ask the County Council when they expect to install the first on-road cycle lane to meet the nationally recommended width (2m). .

Cycle lanes should only be installed where they provide a direct benefit to cyclists. Generally this is only the case when the width is good (or where they help cyclists bypass areas where traffic queues are the norm). In summary, we ask that Councillors insist on widespread use of 2m cycle lanes, and 2m for the Chesterton Road scheme.

We feel that the notion that "Similar road widths for the traffic and cycle lanes may be perceived as two narrow traffic lanes" should not be taken at face value by Councillors. No motorist having any common sense would regard a 2m lane, next to a (supposedly 'similar') 3.5m lane as a second traffic lane

The point that "larger vehicles will need to encroach on the cycle lane" should not be a problem if the lane is advisory, as we stated we were happy to see provided that car parking was prohibited in the cycle lane

We question why a central refuge, with consequent narrowing and creation of a pinchpoint, is necessary in a road of this width. A central refuge is only necessary if insufficient crossing time is being given, so pedestrians should instead be given more time to cross, which ought not to cause undue delays to traffic in this location, given the length of the road.

9) Coronation Street Environmental Traffic Calming

We welcome the proposal for speed cushions in Coronation Street.

² <http://www.camcycle.org.uk/resources/cyclelanewidths/>

We ask that the design of this traffic calming, in a street which contains one-way sections, should not prevent potential future conversion to two-way cycling. Cyclability in two directions is much needed around Newtown to enable cyclists to avoid much busier, dangerous roads like Hills Road and Lensfield Road.

We suggest that Councillors should press for a 20mph speed limit in the whole Newtown area.

10) Cambridgeshire Design Guide for Streets and the Public Realm

We obviously cannot comment on the contents of the draft until it is released to the public, and so reserve judgement on it at this time. We do not consider it reasonable to release the draft only on the day of the AJC meeting giving Councillors and others no adequate opportunity to read it before this agenda item comes up for discussion.

However, in terms of the principle, we think this is a welcome initiative. Locally-based guidance is long overdue, and it is essential to get the document right. The need for a robust document is particularly important given that the resources available to developers often exceed those of the Councils. We particularly welcome the statement in paragraph 4.1 that “A key aim is to encourage designs that are far less motor vehicle led, giving greater emphasis on the needs of pedestrians and cyclists to achieve lower vehicle speeds.” We ask that this new aim be fully taken into account in the County’s current review of Speed Limit Policy.

We are, however, concerned at how the document will intertwine with the government’s new Manual For Streets³, a major new piece of guidance which regards highly the needs of pedestrians and cyclists, and which we believe should be regarded as mandatory reading for all Councillors on the AJC and the Planning Committee! Even more documentation may just dilute messages further, so it is important that additional material is strongly locally-focussed.

We wish to echo strongly point 4.5 in the report regarding unregulated car parking, which has resulted in the kind of unsightly and car-dominated mess that forms the Rustat Road development.

Yours sincerely,
on behalf of Cambridge Cycling Campaign,

Martin Lucas-Smith
Co-ordinator

³ www.manualforstreets.org.uk