

*I have before me some points from the Cycling Campaign which I have offered to read.*

We cannot speak to you today as our attention was drawn to this meeting too late. We are grateful to Cllr \_\_\_\_ for reading our comments. They are our views only. Thank you to those Councillors from various parties who volunteered to read points on our behalf, after we asked yesterday on Twitter.

We are strongly against the proposed changes to eliminate Committee-based decisions on transport and replacing this with a decision made by a Councillor likely to be from outside the City without the opportunity for any public hearing. Officers operate very professionally, but an officer summarising the case of varied groups and residents is no substitute from hearing from them directly.

Let us firstly be clear: the AJC is not a body that in any way operates to a "cyclists' charter". Often, it has heard competing requests from groups such as residents and disability groups, and disagreed with our own point of view. But this is not the point. The point is that each group has had an opportunity to argue their case in public, scrutinise the debate, and respect the eventual decision. It is long-standing management theory that collective decisions are better than decisions taken alone.

How can it possibly "enhance the transparency of decision making" to move from a committee, meeting openly in public, to publishing a document somewhere on the County Council's website for 5 days prior to a private decision?

One Councillor we contacted about this issue yesterday complained that we'd left it rather late to contact them. But the irony is that this will happen all the time in future. Five days is too little time for the public to read a report, never mind provide constructive points that a Cabinet member can read and consider. The result will be floods of last-minute e-mails. How will a Cabinet member weigh up the inevitable 50 e-mails from angry residents one way and 50 e-mails arguing the other way?

Please do not make us resort to submitting a weekly FoI request asking for details of officer reports in preparation. At the very least, if this proposal goes ahead, ensure two weeks as an absolute minimum, with a mechanism for groups to be notified instantly a report goes online.

Cllr Clarke says on his blog that the AJC seems not to do much. But this year has seen little transport funding. This will surely return, due to the success of the County in getting infrastructure funding.

Secondly, we are aware there is a feeling that the AJC has sometimes abused its position by using the meeting for political posturing to criticise the County administration. We too deplore such politicisation. But the vast majority of meetings we've attended have simply seen Councillors working through sometimes difficult, contested decisions.

Lastly, we have heard the rationale that local transport decisions should just involve consultation with the local Councillor. But supposing changes are made for the Core Scheme in Market Ward. Changes here would affect many city wards because changes to the city centre have knock-on effects to the rest of the city. Surely other Councillors, drivers, disability representatives, people cycling, and taxi drivers, should be able to make their case in front of local Councillors publicly.

Please spare the Cambridge AJC. Otherwise, the County will be criticised for poorly-informed decisions which come back to haunt the County financially, floods of last-minute e-mails, an overworked Cabinet member, longer Cabinet meetings, and the breeding of hostility to the County administration who will be seen to be remote.