

# CAMCYCLE



Camcycle

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Rt. Hon. Chris Heaton-Harris MP

**Request for view on removal of major active travel corridor on Mill Road, Cambridge**

House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2021

Dear Mr. Heaton-Harris,

Camcycle is a charitable organisation with over 1,600 members campaigning for more, better, and safer cycling in and around Cambridge. We are writing to request your view on the removal of a bus gate that facilitates a major active travel corridor on a high street which previously experienced 12,000 motor vehicles per day.

Over the past year we have been engaging with communities and local authorities around the implementation of Experimental Traffic Regulation Orders in the region, focussing on the positives that can be built on, and the problems that need to be addressed longer term if the schemes become permanent.

A particularly prominent scheme in Cambridge has been the Mill Road bus gate and associated road build-outs. The bus gate is located on the Mill Road bridge over the railway, and prevents all traffic aside from buses, cycles, and emergency service vehicles from passing using an ANPR system. This scheme has run from late June 2020 and, after a recent council vote on its future, will be removed in full on Tuesday 3rd August pending further consultation and decision on future action in the next six months.

The bus gate has been in place for just over a year and of course has not been without problems. Disabled access is an issue that needs addressing and Camcycle urged the previous County Council administration to find a solution to improve accessibility - options being mooted include exceptions for accessible hackney carriages or a system for allowing blue-badge holders through.

The quality of the build-outs has also been criticised, with temporary plastic barriers at road levels being unfavourably compared to road works and also providing limited benefits to pedestrians and those using mobility aids.

Better options that we have campaigned for included restoring the highly popular parklet that featured on the street in 2019 and using bolt down kerbs and tarmac to widen the pavements semi-permanently, but no action was taken even after a year. These actions, along with a scheme for blue badge holders, could have addressed many community concerns and led to even stronger support for a permanent scheme.

In your letter to local authorities dated 30th July 2021, you state that:

*“We have no interest in requiring councils to keep schemes which are proven not to work, but that proof must be presented. Schemes must not be removed prematurely, or without proper evidence and too soon to collect proper evidence about their effects.”*

Put simply, we believe that the decision to remove the bus gate is premature and is being done against the evidence that is available. The results of the consultation survey run alongside the scheme and published in April 2021 show - even with the problems mentioned - a majority of people feel the road is now safer (55% yes to 36% no), a better environment (56% yes to 22% no) than it was before, and most people (59%)[1] wanted to keep the bus gate either as is, or with improvements made as detailed above.

Given the public support and lack of evidence to support a removal, could you state whether Cambridgeshire County Council’s decision to terminate this scheme before attempting improvements is against the policy set out in both your letter and page 21 of the Gear Change report?

We would welcome a public response to this letter, and also additional information on how best to approach allowing bus-gate exemptions for blue badge holders. Furthermore, we hope this decision by the local authority does not jeopardize future funding for similar schemes in a region that hosts the UK’s cycling capital, Cambridge.

Kind Regards,

Finlay Knops-Mckim  
Trustee - On Behalf of Camcycle

Sources:

[1] <https://bit.ly/MillRoadConsultationReport> – Appendix A, Mill Road ETRO: Summary Report of Consultation Findings, April 2021, Cambridgeshire County Council