

Appendix 1

Cambridgeshire County Council Cabinet Meeting on 19th December 2006 Cambridge Cycling Campaign's Petition on Gilbert Road Safety Scheme (Relates to Agenda Item 7: Accident Remedies and Traffic Management Programme – Medium-Sized Schemes)

Statement by James Woodburn representing Cambridge Cycling Campaign in support of the following petition:

We, the undersigned, ask that Members of Cabinet accept the advice of the Cambridge Traffic Management Area Joint Committee which unanimously agreed "to urge the County's Cabinet to continue its support and funding for a Gilbert Road scheme" (16th October 2006, Minutes Paragraph 90). We ask Cabinet Members to give their backing to the Committee and to the local County Councillor who strongly advocate the retention of agreed funding already allocated which would permit the necessary additional work to achieve a viable and deliverable safety scheme to reduce the high rate of cycle casualties along this road (ten injury accidents over the past three years). Local Councillors are close to finding a compromise solution to bridge the gap between local interest groups. We urge Cabinet Members to continue their support for these efforts.

I speak on behalf of Cambridge Cycling Campaign. We are a local voluntary organisation of ordinary cyclists with more than 800 subscription-paying members. Our aim is to encourage cycling in Cambridge. We work with a variety of local bodies to obtain better provision for local cyclists and to promote legal and responsible cycling.

According to County Council figures more than 25% of people in Cambridge cycle to work. Nearly as many people come into the city centre by bicycle as come in by bus. Further increases in the number of buses will soon be constrained by the shortage of space in the city centre streets. So it seems probable that the proportion of people coming in by bicycle will in future be even greater than it is today. To provide for this, Cambridge streets should be made safer and less intimidating for cycling.

Gilbert Road, one mile north of the city centre, is the subject of our petition. It is a strategic cycle route, an important component of the signed primary cycle route network set out on the official Cambridge Cycle Map. When the massive new developments planned just to the North are completed, even more cyclists will use it. But for cyclists Gilbert Road is dangerous and intimidating. We get more complaints about cycling conditions there than for almost anywhere else in Cambridge. The latest County Council figures show ten cyclist injury accidents along Gilbert Road and its junctions during the last three years (print-out available). Of these ten injured cyclists one died and two sustained serious injuries. These are disturbingly high figures.

They are particularly disturbing because of the number of young people attending schools on Gilbert Road or close to it – a total of some 2,700 young people

according to figures obtained from the Council. The largest of these schools is Chesterton Community College located on the section of Gilbert Road affected by these proposals. We consider that providing a safe cycle route along Gilbert Road for the young people attending these schools should be at the top of everyone's agenda.

The County Council drew up an accident remedial scheme for the section of the road which lies within West Chesterton Ward. This had two components:

1. **Improved street lighting** (to cost, we are told, around £150,000 from the budget of around £300,000 agreed by Cabinet). This street lighting proposal is supported by ourselves and, to the best of our knowledge, by almost everyone else. We welcome the Officer's recommendation (see today's Agenda Item 7) that the Council goes ahead with installing this.
2. **A cycle lane along part of the grass verge** (to be provided from the other half of the allocated and agreed budget). This proposal was strongly opposed by ourselves, by local residents and, we understand, by almost everyone else. In fact we have not yet found anyone who now agrees with it. When this became clear Cabinet wisely recommended further consultation to find a more acceptable alternative. Obviously any such alternative would have to score highly using the Council's methods for evaluating whether proposed schemes would reduce accidents. This process of consultation is still under way and very active. Following valuable discussion at the meeting of the Cambridge Management Area Joint Committee on 16th October members of the committee unanimously supported continuing consultation. Local councillors are working hard to find a solution. Under today's Agenda Item 7, the Officer's report recommends, in effect, the cutting short of this process and the reallocation of this half of the agreed budget to other accident remedial schemes. It is this reallocation that we regard as unacceptable and this is the reason why we are presenting this petition to you today. We ask for time to allow local councillors to complete the consultation process with the help of Council Officers and to find a solution.

Our petition could only be drawn up after the Officer's report for the present meeting was made available late last Monday and so we had little time to secure signatures. However in just two days 220 local people signed, a remarkably high figure, which illustrates how strongly people feel about the issue. The petition has been widely supported by people of all political parties and among the signatories is Councillor Ian Nimmo-Smith, leader of Cambridge City Council. The petition is strongly supported by the Principal of Chesterton Community College, the very large school which is located on Gilbert Road. Many of those who signed are parents of young people attending this school.

Let me end by echoing what many parents have told us. A safe road route along Gilbert Road to schools where so many young people cycle to school must be given top priority. With goodwill and continuing hard work by Local Councillors, Officers and others involved a viable and safe solution within the present budget can and must be found. Please continue to provide your support for this process.