

CAMBRIDGE CITY JOINT AREA COMMITTEE: MINUTES

Date: Tuesday 23rd September 2014

Time: 4.00-5.55pm

Present: County Councillors Cearn, Kavanagh, Nethsingha (substituting for Councillor Manning) and Taylor; City Councillors Blencowe, Robertson, Smart and Tunnaclyffe

Apologies: County Councillors I Manning (Councillor Nethsingha substituting), J Scutt and A Walsh; City Councillors C O'Reilly and D Ratcliffe

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN/WOMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN/WOMAN

The Committee elected Councillor Taylor as the Chairwoman and Councillor Blencowe as the Vice-Chairman for the municipal year 2014-15.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Smart declared an interest in item 5 as a resident of Ross Street, although she advised she was not a cyclist.

Councillor Cearn declared an interest in item 4 as he lived near the Parkside coach passenger waiting facilities.

3. TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDERS (TRO) ASSOCIATED WITH:

(A) THODAY STREET CYCLE PARKING

The Committee received a report on objections received to the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) associated with a proposed cycle parking scheme in Thoday Street.

It was noted that in March 2010, as part of the Department for Transport (DfT) Cycling Towns project, residents on some streets in the Romsey area were asked for their views on whether or not they would support the removal of one or two car parking spaces to provide cycle parking. Only four responses from residents in Thoday Street were received, with three supporting the proposal, and one opposing it. Following requests by local residents and Local Members, this scheme had been developed, with a wider consultation being carried out, and a steer given by the East Area Committee. As part of the TRO process, nine objections and one comment of support had been received.

Simon Nuttall, a resident of Thoday Street, spoke in support of the proposed scheme. He commented that the comprehensive street survey demonstrated strong support for the racks. The TRO only invited objections to the scheme, and the report responded well to those objections raised. The survey showed that 85% of the respondents in the street had bikes, and although there was car parking along the

whole length of the street, there was nothing for bikes, with the result that bikes blocked footways. The proposed scheme would help remedy this situation and provide a solution that would benefit everyone.

Martin Lucas-Smith, representing the Cambridge Cycling Campaign, spoke in support of the proposals. He started by welcoming the reconstitution of the Joint Area Committee. He supported Mr Nuttall's comments and added that cycle parking was essential in promoting cycling as a real mode of transport. He pointed out that the extensive consultation showed the wide ranging support for the proposal.

Local Member County Councillor Bourke spoke in support of the proposal. He advised that he had carried out his own consultation and shared some of the detail of that survey. The survey had indicated widespread support for the proposal, even from those who were motorists and did not cycle. Whilst some respondents had suggested that there was sufficient space in back gardens, others, particularly women, had commented that they felt vulnerable at night, taking their bikes in to their back gardens. He felt that the locations for the bike racks had been very carefully chosen. He also noted the point that the TRO process only sought objections, which was probably why few letters of support had been received.

Local Member City Councillor Baigent spoke in favour of the proposals, and supported the points raised by Councillor Bourke. The consultations indicated wide-ranging support for the scheme and he felt it should be progressed.

In discussion, Committee Members:

- raised the issue of cargo bike/Dutch bikes which were difficult to take down the narrow alley ways;
- noted the provision being proposed was quite limited;
- observed that similar schemes, including some in Committee Members' wards and divisions, had already proved to be very successful, and this was probably the future for many streets in Cambridge, and it would be interesting to see how it developed.

It was resolved to:

- a) determine the objections and make the order as advertised;
- b) Inform the objectors accordingly.

(B) ALBERT STREET

The Committee received a report on objections received following an application for a Disabled Persons Parking bay (DPPB) in the vicinity of 26 Albert Street. Following the statutory consultation process, there were a total of five objections to be determined. It was recommended that the Order was made as the applicant met the County Council's eligibility criteria.

In discussion, Members:

- noted that officers were completely satisfied that the applicant met the relevant eligibility criteria;
- observed that the “equality and diversity implications” sections of the report had been incorrectly completed. A Member also commented that there was an ongoing issue with the County Council’s Community Impact Assessments and Equality Impact Assessments, but this was being addressed;
- commented that it was not within the Committee’s remit to make judgements on anecdotal assessments by the applicant’s neighbours – the issue for the Committee was whether the applicant met the appropriate criteria, and there were no other issues e.g. risk of obstruction;
- noted that the DPPB was not outside the applicant’s house, but at the nearest, most appropriate location. It was further noted that there was an existing residents’ parking scheme in Albert Street.

It was resolved to:

- a) determine the objections and make the order as advertised;
- b) Inform the objectors accordingly.

4. COACH PASSENGER WAITING FACILITIES AT PARKSIDE, CAMBRIDGE

The Committee received a report on coach passenger facilities at Parkside, Cambridge.

It was noted that the arrangement for long-distance coaches to stop and pick up at Parkside had commenced in March 2007. After some initial problems, the number of complaints from residents has petered out. However, complaints have been received from customers and visitors at those coach pick-up and drop-off facilities, specifically the lack of basic facilities e.g. toilets. National Express, the main coach operator, was keen to remain at Parkside and improve the current facilities, whilst understanding the planning sensitivities of Parkside. It was noted that National Express transport around 400,000 passengers per year, in and out of Cambridge, and the current kiosk was subject to a time limited temporary permission. The report proposed that an appropriate scheme for improved facilities could be developed. If a planning application were to be lodged, detailed public consultation would take place prior to an application being made. This would allow an excellent opportunity for comments to be made. Any planning application would also be subject to detailed public consultation.

In discussion, Committee Members raised the following points:

- expressed disappointment on the proposal to extend the temporary facility– the preferred option had always been the railway option, and Parkside was not the right place for a public transport interchange: there were better locations and this only brought more congestion in to the city centre;
- noted the history of the current location and the wide range of alternative sites that had been considered and rejected;
- commented that the whole point of having the temporary solution at Parkside was so that a permanent solution could be identified, and this had not happened. It

was suggested that further investigations of the Park & Ride sites, which were often much more convenient e.g. in terms of access by car;

- suggested that further work needed to be done on who was travelling by coach, what their needs were e.g. exactly where they were travelling to;
- suggested that the members of the public who used the coaches deserved proper consideration and a reasonable level of comfort, security and convenience, especially the elderly, including basic toilet facilities;
- commented that the location was preferable to e.g. the railway station and P&R sites, as it gave passengers access to the city centre, but a more strategic view should be taken;
- commented that the current shelters were unattractive in what was a sensitive location;
- suggested that further consultation was required;
- commented that when this location was initially selected, it was because the railway station and Park & Ride sites had been rejected on various grounds. The current site at Parkside was effective, and any facilities offered only needed to be modest;
- suggested that further investigation, particularly into the Park & Ride sites was necessary – especially as the County Council was looking to improve revenue opportunities at the Park & Ride sites. It was noted that both Madingley and Trumpington Park & Ride sites had been used as coach interchanges for some years, and this generated income of approximately £20,000 per annum for the County Council;
- noted that County Council officers would be working with their City Council colleagues, coach operating companies and take a view on the next steps;
- the Chairwoman asked that a draft of the consultation document be presented to a future Committee meeting.

It was resolved to note the report.

Councillor Nethsingha left the meeting.

5. TWO-WAY CYCLING IN ONE-WAY STREETS

The Committee received a report on proposed changes to signing and lining to allow two-way cycling on a number of restricted streets in Cambridge.

The Department for Transport (DfT) had recently changed traffic signing regulations so that 'except cyclists' plates could be attached to 'no entry' signs. The DfT had also published the draft new Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions manual which removed the requirement for a Traffic Regulation Order for an exception for cycles at no entry signs, making it much easier to implement such schemes.

A 'long list' of potential streets was circulated to County and City Councillors, which was then amended and expanded upon, based on the comments and suggestions received. The suitability of each street for two-way cycling was assessed by officers, considering the width of the road, speed and volume of traffic, as well as the safety, attractiveness and convenience of the alternative routes available, and a 'short list'

had been produced. A number of streets, where no objections or safety concerns had been raised, were already in the process of being made two-way for cycling. Those schemes where there were objections or concerns raised had been brought to the Committee, for determination.

The following speakers and Local Members spoke on this item:

Mr Lucas-Smith, representing the Cambridge Cycling Campaign, spoke in support of the proposals. He commented that two-way cycling would clearly benefit cyclists and traffic in the city, and there was ample evidence that two-way cycling in one-way streets did not cause accidents. He strongly supported the Panton Street scheme, which meant that cyclists could avoid the hazardous junctions near the Royal Cambridge Hotel and the Catholic Church. He also felt that the Ross Street proposal should be extended for the whole road, and that the Albert Street scheme should not be rejected on grounds of narrowness. He hoped that officers would continue with the next stage of the process, and suggested that the default should be all one-way streets made two-way for cycling, some, perhaps, as a trial for twelve months to gauge if there were any problems.

Ms Helen Higgs, Chairwoman of North Newton Residents' Association spoke in objection to Panton Street proposal, and outlined the problems with the scheme, which she had emailed to the Committee. Of particular concern were the proposal for cyclists to turn right from Lensfield Road into Panton Street, requiring cyclists to wait in the middle of Lensfield Road, and also the junction with Pemberton Terrace, which was used as a rat-run by vehicles, especially taxis. The area had a significant number of schools with associated car and cycle traffic, and was also a popular route for cars and taxis travelling to the Railway Station, again with high volumes of traffic.

Councillor Baigent spoke in support of the proposals and supported some of the points made by previous speakers. He pointed out that many cyclists already cycled the wrong way down many of these streets.

The Committee also noted comments from Local Members unable to attend the meeting: Councillor Austin supported the Albert Road scheme, and Councillors Ashwood and Avery objected to the Panton Road scheme.

Members debated each scheme in turn:

Belgrave Street: Members could not see any reason to object to this scheme, and unanimously supported its introduction.

Mercers Row: Members spoke in support of this scheme, although there were some concerns about the number of Heavy Commercial vehicles (HCVs) using the street. Members were informed that there was currently an Environmental Improvement Scheme being looked at to remove right turning HCVs at the junction with Garlic Row and this would resolve the main issue raised by the safety audit. Members were keen to ensure that signage would make it clear to HCVs unfamiliar with the area that they should expect cyclists cycling towards them. Members unanimously supported the introduction of this scheme.

Panton Street: Members noted the concerns raised by residents and Local Members, and some commented that they could not support this scheme until these concerns had been explored more fully. Other Members commented that cyclists were already cycling the wrong way down this street, and it should be implemented, possibly on an experimental basis. It was agreed, by a majority, that this scheme should be deferred pending further investigation.

Ross Street: Members unanimously supported this proposal.

Springfield Road: Councillor Tunnacliffe advised that he had conducted a door to door survey and there had been no objections. It was noted that the access via Mitcham's Corner was already two-way. Officers explained that the main safety concern about both Springfield Road and Trafalgar Street was their narrowness, but speeds in these roads were correspondingly low. A majority of Committee Members supported this proposal.

Trafalgar Street: Councillor Tunnacliffe advised that he had also conducted a door to door survey in this street, and there were no objections. It was clarified that there would be a "no entry except cycles" sign on the access from Victoria Avenue. A majority of Committee Members supported this proposal.

Albert Street: A Member commented that the issues for Albert Street, e.g. narrowness, were the same as for Springfield Road and Trafalgar Street, and this proposal should therefore be progressed. Officers clarified that it had been withdrawn because of both the safety audit and residents' objections. However, it was pointed out that Councillor Austin's survey indicated that there was support for the proposal in Albert Street, and the residents of that street would be the main beneficiaries of the scheme. A majority of Committee Members supported this proposal.

It was resolved to:

Support changes to signing and lining to allow two-way cycling on the following streets:

- a) Belgrave Road,
- b) Mercer's Row,
- d) Ross Street,
- e) Springfield Road,
- f) Trafalgar Street,
- g) Albert Street

and, to agree to defer the changes in the following street, pending a wider review:

- c) Panton Street

Chairwoman