

## Appendix 2

### EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Directorate: Highways and Transport

Service: Project Delivery

Team PD – General

Proposal being assessed: **Mill Road permanent TRO scheme**

#### **Key service delivery objectives and outcomes:**

Active travel, including walking and cycling, is a priority and local transport objective in Cambridgeshire. All transport infrastructure requirements and schemes are recorded in the Cambridgeshire Transport Investment Plan. Schemes are prioritised and funding sought as opportunities arise. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) is the local transport authority for Cambridgeshire. Active and sustainable travel are amongst the objectives as detailed in the draft CPCA Local Transport and Connectivity Plan.

Employment - Connect all new and existing communities sustainably so all residents can easily access a good job within 30 minutes by public transport, spreading the region's prosperity

Resilience - Build a transport network that is resilient and adaptive to human and environmental disruption, improving journey time reliability

Accessibility - Promote social inclusion through the provision of a sustainable transport network that is affordable and accessible for all Health & Wellbeing - Provide 'healthy streets' and high-quality public realm that puts people first and promotes active lifestyles

Climate Change - Reduce emissions to as close to zero as possible to minimise the impact of transport and travel on climate change

Funding and delivery of an accessible, resilient, sustainable and safe local transport network.

#### **What is the proposal:**

In May 2020, following the outbreak of the Covid 19 pandemic, the Government made £250M Emergency Active Travel Fund monies available for pop-up cycle

lanes, wider pavements and cycle and bus corridors to enable social distancing and encourage people to choose to walk or cycle than drive.

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) asked Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council to develop proposals for experimental active travel schemes; one of the proposed schemes included measures to address issues on Mill Road, Cambridge – narrow pavements in an area with high footfall to shops, restaurants and businesses and a high volume of motor and cycle traffic sharing a carriageway of restricted width. Mill Road suffers from high levels of through traffic, which combined with local traffic and the high number of pedestrians and cyclists, causes significant congestion, particularly at peak times, and an unpleasant environment. Air pollution and a poor road safety record are directly related to these issues.

After discussions with local councillors, it was agreed that a Bus Gate on Mill Road bridge would allow for the removal of through traffic and create additional space for social distancing. A series of temporary build-outs was also installed along Mill Road to encourage social distancing and slower traffic speeds.

An Experimental Traffic Order (ETO) restricting vehicular traffic over the railway bridge, except for buses, emergency vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians came into force on 24 June 2020. [In principle an ETO can run for a limited period of up to 18 months with formal objections to be made in writing in the first 6 months after it comes into force.] A public survey on the Bus Gate was also undertaken during the objection period.

Feedback from the first 6 months, together with the public survey, showed a mixed response from the public with a balanced view from those supporting or opposing making the ETO permanent. Recurring themes included: the transport and environmental benefits for many users, especially non-motorised users, the negative impact on businesses due to reduced passing trade, displaced traffic on residential roads and the need to use longer routes impacting negatively on people of low income and taxi users. The need for blue badge holders and taxis to be exempt from the traffic restrictions was raised at this stage. Analysis of the public survey suggested that a number of duplicate responses may have been submitted which may have influenced the number of responses supporting or opposing the Bus Gate scheme.

On 27 July 2021 the Highways and Transport Committee resolved to remove the Bus Gate restriction and undertake a full review and consultation on the options and use of Mill Road; in November 2021 the Committee asked the Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) to undertake the work to review and consult on options for Mill Road within the context of its City Access proposals.

The GCP review of Mill Road was carried out in Spring 2022 and included focus group meetings and workshops with key stakeholders and a public consultation between 7 February and 21 March. 1,986 responses were received in total, with clear support (72%) for the re-instatement of the Mill Road Bus Gate but with important caveats such as allowing exemptions for disabled residents and taxis. 83%

of respondents also supported improvements to the public realm, walking, cycling and local parking along Mill Road.

On 12 July 2022 a report on the GCP review was considered by the Committee who agreed to progress with the next steps to enable the implementation of the Bus Gate. A statutory consultation on making a TRO permanent, with exemptions including disabled residents and taxis, would be required. The Committee also resolved to work with the CPCA and GCP on a public realm scheme, to work with GCP on the Network Hierarchy Review and to monitor and review traffic levels should the modal filter be reintroduced.

The Mill Road Bus Gate TRO was advertised between 28 November 2022 and 6 January 2023; the proposed TRO would restrict vehicular traffic over the railway bridge, but with a greater number of exemptions than the earlier Bus Gate scheme: local buses, cyclists, pedestrians, taxis/PHVs, blue badge holders and authorised vehicles would all be exempt. The Policy and Regulation team received 690 objections to the TRO and 291 comments supporting the TRO; 316 objections and 244 supportive comments were submitted with detailed feedback. A decision on whether or not the TRO should be made permanent will be taken by the Highways and Transport Committee on 7 March 2023.

This scheme-specific Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) focuses on the impact the scheme would have if approved.

### **What information did you use to assess who would be affected by this proposal?:**

The proposal had been assessed against how it fits with government guidance, direct transport benefits and impacts on the wider network, and the capability to deliver them quickly. An initial EqIA for the 2020-21 ETO Bus Gate was produced considering the impact on protected characteristics. The 2020-21 Bus Gate was in place for just over a year so a detailed consideration of protected characteristics can be made to assist with a decision on the proposed TRO scheme.

Analysis of the GCP consultation results and meetings with disability groups provided useful feedback.

*Air Quality Monitoring, Mill Road, Cambridge, 2021* – Anne-Marie Hindley, Cambridge City Council

*The Impact of Introducing a Low Traffic Neighbourhood on Street Crime, in Waltham Forest, London, 2021* - Anna Goodman, Faculty of Epidemiology and Population Health, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and Rachel Aldred, Active Travel Academy, University of Westminster

*Changes in Motor Traffic inside London's LTNs and on Boundary Roads, 2023* – Asa Thomas & Rachel Aldred, Active Travel Academy, University of Westminster

**Are there any gaps in the information you used to assess who would be affected by this proposal?:**

No

**Does the proposal cover:**

All service users/customers/service provision countywide

**Which particular employee groups/service user groups will be affected by this proposal?:**

The Mill Road community: the restriction on through access over the Mill Road bridge would have impacts on most people who live, work or access Mill Road as they would no longer be able to travel over the railway bridge in a motorised vehicle except by bus, taxi or as a blue badge holder. They would therefore need to find an alternative route by car or choose to walk or cycle. Many residents who live on or near to Mill Road with a protected characteristic wishing to cross the bridge by private vehicle would experience the same level of inconvenience as other users of private vehicles from increased journey times. Therefore the Bus Gate would not disproportionately impact individuals with a protected characteristic. There is public parking on either side of the railway bridge (at Gwydir Street car park and Great Eastern Street). Blue badge holders will be exempt and will be allowed to travel over the bridge, therefore will have a neutral impact on people with a disability who are a blue badge holder. Blue badge holders are still able to park on yellow lines, providing that it is not during the hours of operation of a prohibition on loading/unloading, thus enabling closer access. Feedback from the earlier Bus Gate suggested that the reduction in vehicular traffic had a positive impact on those using mobility aids due to reduced pavement parking. The designers of the new Bus Gate and the planned public realm improvements would consider the additional needs of the disabled. New disabled parking bays will be part of the public realm scheme. It was noted that the temporary build-outs of the earlier Bus Gate along Mill Road reduced the opportunity for blue badge holders to park closer to some of their destinations and there was, therefore, a negative impact to blue badge holders with regards to the build-out design. This information will be useful when designing the public realm scheme.

There would be some negative impact on members of the community who would usually access their place of worship by travelling by private vehicle over the bridge and would have a longer journey to do so. Those who are able could walk or cycle as an alternative; those who have impaired mobility but are not a blue badge holder would also be negatively impacted to some extent by the scheme. Many pregnant women for example would be able to walk but there may be some negative impact on those who are pregnant and rely on their car, especially in the later stages of pregnancy.

Taxis or private hire vehicles (PHV) would be exempt so access over the bridge will remain as existing and will therefore have a neutral financial impact on all residents,

including the disabled and/or elderly, who rely on taxis or PHVs as a mode of transport.

The Bus Gate scheme would support the use of sustainable transport methods such as walking, cycling and buses by creating a more reliable bus route. This would have a positive impact on people who cannot afford to own a private car but are able to use alternative modes of travel. Feedback from the bus operator indicated reduced delays and improved reliability of journey times along the corridor during the earlier Bus Gate scheme due to the reduction in congestion. This should make bus services more attractive; sustainable modes of travel should be encouraged as the economy recovers after the pandemic.

Access on Mill Road would only be restricted at the railway bridge; all vehicular traffic would have access up to each end of the bridge. Signage would be in place to notify road users of the restrictions and that all businesses remain open. The increase in journey times to access businesses or properties on or near to Mill Road would impact visitors, employees and delivery vehicles who would no longer be able to travel over the bridge; however there would be no significant disproportionate impact to any persons with protected characteristics. The improved safety for pedestrians and cyclists would provide a positive impact on residents and visitors to Mill Road of all demographics who choose to walk or cycle on the road. Feedback from the earlier Bus Gate scheme noted that the reduction in motorised traffic and pavement parking allowed safer, more accessible travel for young and older pedestrians and cyclists or families using these modes of transport. It therefore had a positive impact on younger people and families, as well as the wider community who chose to walk and cycle more. Under the new scheme the reduction in traffic may lead to improved air quality and reduced noise pollution which would have a significant positive impact to all the immediate community and those accessing Mill Road.

Some feedback from the earlier Bus Gate period made reference to a perceived reduction in personal safety along Mill Road at night due to lower traffic levels, and in particular the negative impact on women alone at night who may choose to walk instead of paying for a longer taxi journey. With taxis being allowed through the proposed Bus Gate, this may reduce some of the fears associated with personal safety. It should be noted that a recent study (A Goodman, R Aldred 2021) on a Low Traffic Neighbourhood (LTN) in Waltham Forest showed a reduction in street crime of 18% over 3 years after the implementation of the LTN compared to other areas of Waltham Forest and Outer London (the reduction in street violence and sexual offences was even more pronounced). Perception of reduced safety when traffic levels are lower nevertheless remains an issue.

The wider community: the restriction on through access over the Mill Road bridge could impact on the wider community. The restriction of through traffic over the railway bridge would impact on road users who previously used Mill Road to access Cambridge city centre – the proposed Bus Gate would mean they would experience longer journey times using alternative routes. However, there would be no significant disproportionate impact on specific persons with protected characteristics. Residents

of surrounding roads would be impacted by the traffic displaced by the restrictions on Mill Road. There are a number of arterial roads, such as Coldhams Lane, Newmarket Road and Hills Road that would be used as alternative routes, as well as some side streets off Mill Road. These roads may experience increased traffic levels and the negative impacts this causes, such as increased noise and air pollution and a more unpleasant walking or cycling environment. The increased traffic on alternative routes may have some impact on people with protected characteristics, for example those with respiratory problems or reduced mobility. It should be noted that Cambridge City Council's monitoring of the full bridge closure in 2019 revealed *"there was no discernable corresponding change in air pollutant concentrations"* on the diversion routes. A recent study (A Thomas, R Aldred 2023) also showed that *"LTNs have substantially reduced motor traffic on internal roads, without having much impact on motor traffic on boundary roads. However, many of the boundary roads may still be polluted, unsafe, and/or difficult to cross or cycle on. Removing LTNs is unlikely to help, but other measures could: for instance, low emission zones have already had substantial impacts on pollution levels, although more ambitious action is needed, like stricter and/or larger low emission zones. Further research could examine impacts of policies seeking to reduce motor traffic and/or its negative impacts on busier roads; for instance, city-wide traffic reduction and clean air measures, extensions of bus priority or cycling infrastructure, improved crossings, reduced speed limits and speed enforcement. Such measures, if effective, can complement and extend the benefits LTNs are having within their boundaries"*. The GCP's Road Network Hierarchy review is seeking to address many of the city-wide transport issues.

Overview: the Mill Road proposal initially intends to reduce inequality by promoting public health by enabling, safe and sustainable journeys and reducing the harmful impacts of motor traffic. The scheme has the potential to provide a green legacy in respect to increasing active travel.

**Does the proposal relate to the equality objectives set by the Council's Single Equality Strategy?:**

Yes

**Will people with particular protected characteristics or people experiencing socio-economic inequalities be over/under represented in affected groups:**

Roughly in line with the population

**Does the proposal relate to services that have been identified as being important to people with particular protected characteristics/who are experiencing socio-economic inequalities?:**

No

**Does the proposal relate to an area with known inequalities?:**

No

**What is the significance of the impact on affected persons?:**

People with protected characteristics will be able to travel through the Bus Gate on foot, by bicycle, by bus, by taxi/PHV and, if they are Blue Badge holders, by one of two vehicles they can register. All Blue Badge holders are eligible to register two vehicles - this has not been limited to only those Blue Badge holders living in the local area because it was felt this could be discriminatory to those who live outside the local area who regularly travel to work, or use the amenities, on Mill Road.

Equally taxis/PHVs would not be restricted to only those with a Cambridge City Council licence because this may negatively impact on taxi/PHV users who start or end their journey to Mill Road from outside the city. The Bus Gate may negatively impact those people with protected characteristics who are not eligible for a Blue Badge but it would be very difficult to provide or administer a system that would allow some people who have no Blue Badge over the bridge and not others.

**Category of the work being planned:**

Project

**Is it foreseeable that people from any protected characteristic group(s) or people experiencing socio-economic inequalities will be impacted by the implementation of this proposal (including during the change management process)?:**

Yes

**Please select:**

Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Pregnancy and maternity, Race, Socio-economic inequalities

**Research, data and /or statistical evidence:**

Government traffic management guidance in response to COVID-19 Government guidance on reallocating road space National Travel Survey and Cambridgeshire traffic monitoring report

Legislation relating to Traffic Regulation Order and the application of public sector equality duties.

**Consultation evidence:**

The GCP undertook an extensive public consultation in Spring 2022 with focus groups and workshops. An analysis report of the consultation results was appended to the Highways & Transport Committee report for the 12 July 2022 meeting. Prior to (and during) the proposed TRO advertisement period (28 November 2022 to 6 January 2023) local stakeholders were consulted on the traffic restrictions (TRO) and the proposed exemptions (those who would be allowed to drive over the bridge):

County Councillors

County Council officers

City Council officers

Greater Cambridge Partnership

Disability groups

**Based on all the evidence you have reviewed/gathered, what positive impacts are anticipated from this proposal?:**

Reduced volume of traffic and improved space for cycling would encourage more people to cycle along Mill Road, including young people travelling to school, families and wider demographics taking up cycling instead of using a private car.

Reduced volume of traffic would create a safer and more pleasant environment for pedestrians to walk along Mill Road and spend more time there.

Reduced congestion on Mill Road would create an improved bus corridor and result in fewer delays to bus services. More reliable bus routes would make travelling by bus a more attractive form of travel and positively impact users who are unable to travel by private car.

Reduced volume of traffic and congestion would improve air quality and reduce noise pollution making it a more pleasant and safer environment to spend time in.

**Based on consultation evidence or similar, what negative impacts are anticipated from this proposal?:**

Increase in journey time for many road users who would usually travel over Mill Road bridge to access services on or around Mill Road, or who use it as a through route – this could include community nurses, agency care workers and informal carers. However, elderly and vulnerable road users who do not have a Blue Badge will not experience this negative impact disproportionately more than other road users.

There may be increased congestion and air pollution on alternative routes although recent studies suggest in the longer term motor traffic on these routes will reduce/evaporate to a greater or lesser degree.

Perception of reduced personal safety of pedestrians with lower traffic levels, in particular at night-time.

**How will the process of change be managed?:**

If the TRO scheme is approved, Comms will be undertaken to ensure the public are aware of the changes and of the registration system for exempted vehicles.

Engagement with Disability groups will be of particular importance to ensure the Bus Gate and exemptions registration process is fully understood. Engagement with local businesses, community groups, faith groups etc on the forthcoming public realm



improvements would also allow further opportunities to provide information about the TRO scheme.

A decision will be made by members of the Highways and Transport committee on 7 March 2023.

**How will the impacts during the change process be monitored and improvements made (where required)?:**

The earlier Bus Gate was in place for over a year (June 2020 to August 2021) so those people affected by that scheme would have had time to adjust to the changes it brought; if the TRO is approved and the Bus Gate is made permanent, those affected by the changes will be able to draw on their knowledge of the previous scheme to adapt once more to traffic restrictions on the bridge. People who are new to the area will not have that experience, however, so engagement with local community groups and GP surgeries would be required. For people who feel they were significantly negatively affected by the previous scheme, permanent traffic restrictions may cause them stress or distress. For those who benefitted from the previous scheme, the reintroduction of traffic restrictions should be a positive change.

**Equality Impact Assessment Action Plan:**

Details of negative impact (e.g. worse treatment/outcomes)	Groups affected	Severity of impact	Action to mitigate impact with reasons/evidence to support this or justification for retaining negative impact	Who by	When by
Financial impact on people who rely on motor vehicles as a form of travel	Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Pregnancy and maternity, Race, Socio-economic inequalities	Low	Opening up the bridge to additional categories of people would undermine the aims of the scheme. It would be very difficult to provide or administer a system that would allow some vulnerable or low income people to travel over the bridge but not others. There are also insufficient resources to run such a registration system	Highways & Transport Committee	22.12.2023

Community nurses, agency care workers and informal carers (family, friends, neighbours) would in some instances have longer journeys	Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Pregnancy and maternity, Race, Socio-economic inequalities	Low	Work with NHS, care agencies and local community to ensure they are aware of the changes and where possible can adapt/change rounds	Project Team	22.12.2023
Increased traffic flows and air pollution on side roads/alternative routes	Disability, Pregnancy and maternity	Medium	Traffic and air quality monitoring; interventions if required	Project Team, Executive Director, C/VC	01.07.2024
Impact of reduced traffic flow on perception of personal safety along Mill Road, particularly at night	Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Pregnancy and maternity, Religion or belief (including no belief, Sexual orientation, Race	Medium	Monitor activity levels – the new Bus Gate should increase footfall in the area at night. Taxis/PHVs would be exempt from the traffic restrictions unlike previously. Work with schools, colleges, local community and faith groups on the public realm improvements so the views of the affected groups can feed into the design	Project Team	01.07.2024