

Greater Cambridge Partnership's Programme for the Review of Mill Road, Cambridge

To: Highways and Transport Committee

Meeting Date: 12th July 2022

From: Steve Cox, Executive Director, Place and Economy

Electoral division(s): All

Key decision: No

Forward Plan ref: Not applicable

Outcome: To receive the recommendations of Greater Cambridge Partnership's (GCP) review of Mill Road within the context of its City Access work.

Recommendation:

1. Note the review undertaken by the GCP of Mill Road;
2. Agree to consult on a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) to reinstate the modal filter on Mill Road;
3. Agree to consult on exemptions to the TRO, including disabled residents and taxis;
4. Agree to work with the Combined Authority and GCP to develop a public realm improvement scheme along Mill Road;
5. Agree to monitor and review traffic levels in surrounding streets should the modal filter on Mill Road be reintroduced; and
6. Continue to work with GCP on the Network Hierarchy Review of the Cambridge road network.

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1. Background

Mill Road

- 1.1 At the meeting on 27 July the Highways and Transport Committee considered the Mill Road, Cambridge Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO). The Committee resolved to remove the restriction and undertake a full review and consultation on the options and use of Mill Road, in the light of further work to manage city access, in particular the Network Hierarchy review, adopting the holistic approach as outlined in the report and to instruct officers to consider funding opportunities to carry out further consultation and development of a plan to address issues in Mill Road.
- 1.2 The Committee further resolved at its meeting of 4 November to request that the Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) undertake the work to review and consult on options for Mill Road and asked GCP to carry it out within the context of its City Access proposals. The Committee requested that the GCP seek to expedite this work and update the Committee on the emerging programme at the December meeting. This report provides an update on the GCP's review and recommendations to the County Council.
- 1.3 The Mill Road filter project offers an opportunity to establish a template for future scheme monitoring, assessment and review with a particular focus on the implications and mitigations for alternative routes.

The City Access Strategy

- 1.4 As part of its programme of works, the GCP has developed a public transport improvements strategy and a city access strategy that sit at the heart of the City Deal, aiming to address some of the major pressures on the local economy by reducing congestion and pollution, and by providing people with better, healthier, more sustainable options for their journeys – key objectives of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Transport Plan.¹ Taking action on these issues is a key part of supporting a green recovery.
- 1.5 The GCP has undertaken detailed work to understand these issues, alongside comprehensive public and stakeholder engagement activities, and to develop a vision for the future
- 1.6 The City Access work encompasses a number of activities to support delivery of these objectives, including active travel, integrated parking and network hierarchy plans (in partnership with the County Council), traffic signals pilots, bus improvement projects and supporting the County Council in delivery of Experimental Traffic Regulation Orders (ETROs) as part of the Emergency Active Travel Schemes programme. The review of Mill Road was undertaken in this context.

Network Hierarchy Review

- 1.7 A key component of the City Access programme is a review of Cambridge's road network. Developing a new road network hierarchy for Cambridge presents an opportunity to make better use of our road space to increase the number of journeys made by public and active

¹ <https://bit.ly/3mRfBEj>

transport. Alongside wider city access work streams, it seeks to improve bus journey times and reliability, facilitate more frequent services and create a better, safer environment for people walking, cycling and using other active travel modes.

- 1.8 The current road classification in Cambridge was last reviewed in the early 1980s when the M11 western bypass and A14 (formerly A45) northern bypasses were opened. At that time the focus was on directing motorists towards the most suitable routes for reaching their destination by identifying roads that were considered the best suited for traffic.
- 1.9 Since that time there has been a considerable shift in transport policy, physical changes to the road network in the city and travel habits that need to be better reflected in the way that the city road network is managed and operated. Local transport policy through the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Transport Plan (LTP) supports the importance of sustainable travel in reducing congestion, improving air quality and tackling issues of climate change. The review offers an opportunity to make a fundamental change to the way that the road network facilitates travel in the city through a step change in the allocation of road-space for public transport and active travel (walking and cycling).
- 1.10 By better managing traffic access, the review offers an opportunity to develop a city centre that has place-making at its core, with more pleasant spaces to visit and spend time, cleaner air and a safer environment for vulnerable road users. The review therefore supports the introduction of further modal filter measures, and the like, to promote walking, cycling and public transport.
- 1.11 Public consultation is an essential component in shaping the new hierarchy. A consultation is currently underway, and this process will help shape a final network hierarchy proposal with a report brought to a future meeting of the Highways and Transport Committee.

Review of Mill Road

- 1.12 The priorities for the Mill Road Project are to review, design and develop deliverable proposals in line with the County Council's extant Highways and Transport Committee decision.
- 1.13 In the context of the City Access proposals, the GCP review of Mill Road sought to achieve the widest possible exposure of proposals, demonstrate how proposals for Mill road will work with the City Access proposals to deliver a wholesale improvement in congestion and air quality without compromising access for various groups, and to deliver a technically and procedurally sound solution for Mill Road. This included assurance of the public consultation process.
- 1.14 The process commenced early in 2022 and key activities included;
 - Independently facilitated focus groups of key local stakeholders – MillRd4People, Local Traders, Camcycle etc and representative sample of the public
 - Review of options and identification of "quick wins"
 - Public consultation to sift options and quick wins

Public Consultation

- 1.15 Between 07 February and 21 March 2022 the Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) held an extensive consultation on a scheme to develop options for improvements to Mill Road. The full consultation report is appended to this report, Appendix 1. The key highlights of the consultation include;
- ‘Congestion’ was the most important issue respondents felt was affecting Mill Road
 - The majority of respondents opposed ‘Theme 1: Do nothing’
 - The majority of respondents supported ‘Theme 2: Improve the quality of the place’ and ‘Theme 3: Changes to traffic and access in the medium and long term’
 - The majority of respondents supported:
 - ‘Restricting motor vehicles from crossing Mill Road bridge
 - ‘Possible allowances for buses, taxis and drivers with disabilities and/ or mobility needs’
 - A great number of detailed comments were received, from which the most common areas of discussion were:
 - That closing Mill Road to motorised traffic would benefit residents, businesses and cycling/pedestrian safety. However, exemptions were felt to be needed for those with disabilities, businesses, buses, and residents.
 - That motorised traffic parking on pavements and speeding were responsible for safety and congestion issues on Mill Road, with improved enforcement of rules required to curb this behaviour.
 - That improvements to the width and general maintenance of the paths were needed to provide space and safety increases for pedestrians, particularly those using mobility aids.
 - That closing Mill Road to motorised traffic would cause increased congestion on nearby streets, negatively impact on businesses and residents in the area. Alternative suggestions included making restrictions time limited or making Mill Road a one-way street for motorised traffic.
- 1.16 The public consultation is therefore clearly supporting a re-instatement of the Mill Road modal filter, but with some important caveats. There is considerable support for a more nuanced position on the closure; allowing exemptions for example, for disabled residents or taxis. Such exemptions are reflective of the GCP’s City Access proposals, tackling air quality and congestion without compromising access. The Network Hierarchy review includes proposals for managing access for taxis and disabled residents.
- 1.17 The workshops and public consultation also clearly supported an improvement in the local environment along Mill Road. This would enhance the public realm, walking, cycling and local parking provision along the road. An area improvement scheme would also support local businesses by further enhancing the character and attractiveness of the area.

Traffic Data

- 1.18 A review of the traffic data has been undertaken as part of the GCP review. The full report is appended to this report, Appendix 2. In summary, the Mill Road scheme was undertaken at the height of the pandemic when traffic volumes were considerably lower and travel

patterns very different to normal. Conclusions cannot therefore be drawn on the impact on surrounding roads as a result of the closure. It is therefore important that in taking forward any closure on Mill Road, the County Council should closely monitor the impact on the surrounding area and feed those results into the ongoing Network Hierarchy Review work.

2. Alignment with corporate priorities

2.1 Environment and Sustainability

The City Deal and associated City Access Strategy seeks to reduce congestion and pollution, and by providing people with better, healthier, more sustainable options for their journeys

2.2 Health and Care

The City Deal and associated City Access Strategy seeks to reduce congestion and pollution, and by providing people with better, healthier, more sustainable options for their journeys

2.3 Places and Communities

There are no significant implications for this priority.

2.4 Children and Young People

There are no significant implications for this priority

2.5 Transport

The City Deal and associated City Access Strategy seeks to reduce congestion and pollution, improve air quality and contribute to net-zero, and by providing people with better, healthier, more sustainable options for their journeys.

3. Significant Implications

3.1 Resource Implications

There are no significant implications for this priority.

3.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications

There are no significant implications for this priority.

3.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

The GCP consultation and associated decisions will be carried out in a procedurally sound way.

3.4 Equality and Diversity Implications

Equality and diversity will be a key consideration of the consultation and associated options.

3.5 Engagement and Communications Implications

See 1.7 and 1.8

3.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement.

Significant local involvement through consultation.

3.7 Public Health Implications

Public Health will be considered through the consultation.

3.8 Environment and Climate Change Implications on Priority Areas

3.8.1 Implication 1: Energy efficient, low carbon buildings.

Neutral Status:

Explanation: There are no significant implications within this category

3.8.2 Implication 2: Low carbon transport.

Neutral Status:

Explanation: The City Deal proposals seek to deliver more sustainable transport solutions

3.8.3 Implication 3: Green spaces, peatland, afforestation, habitats and land management.

Neutral Status:

Explanation: There are no significant implications within this category

3.8.4 Implication 4: Waste Management and Tackling Plastic Pollution.

Neutral Status:

Explanation: There are no significant implications within this category

3.8.5 Implication 5: Water use, availability and management:

Neutral Status:

Explanation: There are no significant implications within this category

3.8.6 Implication 6: Air Pollution.

Neutral Status:

Explanation: The City Deal proposals seek to tackle air pollution

3.8.7 Implication 7: Resilience of our services and infrastructure, and supporting vulnerable people to cope with climate change.

Neutral Status:

Explanation: There are no significant implications within this category

Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance? Yes

Name of Financial Officer: David Parcell

Have the procurement/contractual/ Council Contract Procedure Rules implications been cleared by the Head of Procurement? Yes
Name of Officer: Clare Ellis

Has the impact on statutory, legal and risk implications been cleared by the Council's Monitoring Officer or LGSS Law? Yes
Name of Legal Officer: Fiona McMillan

Have the equality and diversity implications been cleared by your Service Contact?
Yes
Name of Officer: David Allatt

Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications?
Yes
Name of Officer: Sarah Silk

Have any localism and Local Member involvement issues been cleared by your Service Contact? Yes
Name of Officer: David Allatt

Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health?
Yes
Name of Officer: Iain Green

4. Source documents

- 4.1 Mill Road Spring 2022 Consultation: Summary Report of Consultation Findings- Appendix 1
Mill Road Bridge Traffic Review – Appendix 2