

Highways and Transport Committee: Minutes

Date: 27 July 2021

Time: 2.00pm to 6.45pm

Present: Councillors Alex Beckett, Gerri Bird (Vice Chair), Piers Coutts, Doug Dew, Lorna Dupré, Ryan Fuller, Derek Giles, Simon King, Mac McGuire, Brian Milnes, Edna Murphy, Neil Shailer, Alan Sharp, and Mandy Smith

Venue: The Corn Exchange, Cambridge

14. Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors French, Howell (Councillor McGuire substituting), and McDonald.

It was proposed by Councillor Murphy, and seconded by Councillor Milnes, that the standing order (Section 23 - Appointments to Committees, Part 4.4 – Committee and Sub-Committee Meetings, Part 4 Rules of Procedure) be suspended to enable Councillor Dupré to act as the substitute for Councillor McDonald. It was noted that Councillor McDonald had been required to self-isolate following notification that he had been exposed to COVID-19 by the NHS Test and Trace app, while Councillor Nethsingha, who was originally attending as his substitute, had also been required to self-isolate, following a similar notification from the app.

One Member expressed concern over the proposal to suspend standing orders in such a manner, drawing attention to the fact that Councillors did not have individual nominated substitutes and that the Liberal Democrat group was able to seek a substitute from a pool of five substitutes.

On being put to the vote, the motion was carried by majority and Councillor Dupré joined the Committee.

There were no declarations of interest.

15. Minutes – 22nd June 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on 22nd June 2021 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Vice-Chair.

16. Highways and Transport Committee Action Log

While observing that some of the actions were from a few years ago, and requesting that they be either completed or updated, the Committee noted its Action Log.

17. Petitions and Public Questions

The Committee was informed that two petitions and two public questions had been received, while a significant number of requests to speak on specific items had also been received and would be heard at the beginning of the respective agenda items.

The Vice-Chair invited Professor Carola-Bibiane Schönlieb to present her question to the Committee. Highlighting that reducing the default 30mph speed limit to 20mph reduced road casualties by an average of 20%, reduced pollution and noise levels, while also increasing levels of active travel, Professor Schönlieb informed the Committee that the practice was supported by the United Nations, the World Health Organisation and Public Health England. Noting that there had been 648 road casualties in Cambridgeshire on 30mph roads in 2019, she argued that investing £2m to implement a 20mph default speed limit across Cambridgeshire could therefore prevent over 100 deaths per year, thus saving the Council £6.4m per year. She asked the Committee when it would set a policy to normalise 20mph as the default speed limit in Cambridgeshire and budget for its implementation.

The Vice-Chair informed Professor Schönlieb that she would receive a written response from the Council within ten working days of the meeting. **Action Required.**

A petition with 122 signatories was read out by the clerk on behalf of Mr Jonathan Cooke relating to the recent installation of a vehicle length restriction sign on Cage Hill in Swaffham Prior. Noting that the sign had been installed on private land in a village conservation area without any prior consultation with the local community, Mr Cooke called for the sign to be removed and reinstalled in an alternative location following a full consultation with Swaffham Prior Parish Council, the East Cambridgeshire District Council Conservation Officer and other relevant stakeholders.

The Vice-Chair advised that a written response from the Council would be sent to the petition organiser and signatories within ten working days of the meeting. **Action Required.**

The Vice-Chair invited Mr Robert Day to present a petition with 1,246 signatories relating to the decision of the Council to close the car park at Skaters Meadow in Cambridge. Noting that the area was one of the few places in Cambridge that was accessible for open swimming, he argued that the closure of the car park would disproportionality affect more vulnerable residents and would impact on those living in the more deprived areas of the city that were not able to walk and was therefore contrary to the Council's Strategic Framework that promoted healthy active lifestyles. He also highlighted the issue of consent by the landowners and access to their private land. Mr Day urged the Committee to reflect on the Council's priorities and provide green open spaces that were available for everyone to enjoy.

Councillor Beckett read a statement from Councillor Nethsingha in response to the petition in which she acknowledged the concern of the petitioners and sought to provide assurance that, contrary to limiting access, the aim was to ensure the maintenance of safe access and to protect the environment. Councillor Nethsingha asked Mr Day whether he accepted that some level of change in the management of the area was

required. In response, Mr Day argued that the question was in the landowner's intent and was not within the Council's remit.

The Vice-Chair thanked Mr Day and advised that a written response would be sent within ten working days of the meeting. **Action Required.**

The clerk read a question from Mr Andrew Whitaker relating to Skaters Meadow. Highlighting the number of people that walked the meadow, together with the issues presented by commuters, campervans and local residents that sought to avoid parking charges elsewhere, Mr Whitaker drew attention to the environmental damage caused by drivers seeking to park their vehicles. He asked the Committee whether it supported low carbon transport and initiatives that reduced the impact on the natural environment, and whether it would uphold the law on Public Rights of Way across Cambridgeshire, so that Skaters Meadow Footpath could be safely used by walkers and cyclists, while being protected from environmental damage caused by motor vehicles.

The Vice-Chair advised that a written response would be sent to Mr Whitaker within ten working days of the meeting. **Action Required.**

18. A1123 and A1421 Reclassification to 'B' Road Status

Members considered a report that followed a motion passed by full Council on 15th December 2020, which provided the Committee with an analysis of the proposal to reclassify the A1123 and the A1421 to 'B' road status. Attention was drawn to the resultant loss of income that would result for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough City Council were the road to be reclassified, and it was argued that it would have little impact on the level of road usage by Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs), given their mainly local movements. Instead, it was suggested that the Committee could consider alternative options for traffic calming.

The Vice-Chair invited Mrs Wendy Oldfield to address the Committee. Highlighting the detrimental effects of historic problems of traffic levels and speeding on the road, Mrs Oldfield drew attention to the insufficient width of the road, which was exacerbated by the high levels of HGVs. Noting the dangerous levels of greenhouse gas emissions and noise suffered by residents of Earith, she asked the Committee to reject the proposal.

The Vice-Chair thanked Mrs Oldfield and advised that a written response would be sent within ten working days of the meeting. **Action Required.**

Councillor Bill Hunt, the East Cambridgeshire District councillor for the Stretham ward, was invited to address the Committee. Noting that no objections to the proposal had been received from the local community during extensive consultation or during the Council meeting in December 2020, Councillor Hunt drew attention to nearby major A roads that avoided inhabited areas and argued that the A1123 and A1421 were designed for B road purposes. He highlighted the negative affects on local residents and their call to reclassify the roads in order to facilitate Local Highway Improvement schemes, and encouraged the Committee to listen to the voice of the local community.

The Vice-Chair thanked Councillor Hunt and advised that a written response would be sent within ten working days of the meeting. **Action Required.**

The clerk read out a written statement from Councillor Dan Schumann, County Councillor for Soham South and Haddenham. Drawing attention to the high levels of traffic endured by local communities, Councillor Schumann argued that the recommendation did not take consideration of the opinions of affected communities. Noting that every parish within his division supported the declassification as the most effective means of dealing with longstanding issues, he emphasised that full Council had also supported it in December 2020, and argued that it would therefore be undemocratic to reject the declassification.

The clerk read out a written statement from Councillor Steve Criswell, County Councillor for Somersham and Earith. Noting the narrow footpath and large number of old properties in Earith that were affected by the noise, vibration, air pollution and volume of traffic on the A1123, he argued that local HGVs did not need to traverse the whole area, and suggested allocating funding to environmental improvements in the most affected villages.

During discussion of the report, individual Members raised the following points:

- acknowledged that full Council had supported the declassification in December 2020 without any opposition.
- argued that reclassification of the roads would not necessarily reduce traffic volumes, and that alternative mitigations would be more effective, although it was suggested that satellite navigation devices used by HGVs indicated the A road as the best route and that reclassification would therefore direct traffic to alternative, more suitable routes. It was argued that it was inconsistent that a 5% reduction in traffic identified during the redevelopment of the A14 had been considered significant, whereas a 20% reduction in traffic resulting from the proposal to reclassify the A1123 and A1421 was considered insignificant. It was also noted that a high proportion of the diverted traffic would be HGVs, which represented the most concerning aspect of current traffic levels along the roads.
- expressed concern regarding the cost to the Council in terms of lost funding from the Department for Transport, although it was argued by one Member that such losses would not be significant when considered alongside the overall highways budget, while alternative measures would represent a larger cost. It was also argued by one Member that the loss of funding for Peterborough City Council should not be taken into consideration, as the roads were in Cambridgeshire.
- recognised the views expressed by local residents, local Members and the public speakers, and argued that a rejection of the declassification would have a detrimental effect on people's lives.
- argued that a rejection of the reclassification would contradict the environmental commitments of the Council.
- highlighted the positive, proactive impact that would result from reclassification, and argued that the Council should be more 'can-do' and proactive.

- recognised the need for traffic calming measures in local communities along the A roads, although it was suggested that previous attempts to install traffic calming measures had been rejected on the basis that they were A roads. It was clarified by the Traffic Manager that regulations permitted local authorities to install measures where speed limits were 30mph or less, regardless of the classification of the road. However, there were other considerations that had to be taken into account before any installation could take place.
- argued that although the level of HGV and other traffic movements on the routes was of great concern, the road could not be treated in isolation, and that it was not a solution to simply move traffic onto other roads.
- observed that while problems existed on some stretches of the A roads, other parts of them were included in the County's strategic freight routes.

The following amendment to the recommendations was proposed by Councillor McGuire and seconded by Councillor Smith (addition in bold, removal in strikethrough):

- a) Note the requirement for a decision on this matter to be taken by Committee, for the reasons set out in the report;
- b) ~~On the balance of the technical analysis contained in this report not to progress~~ **Progress** the proposal to declassify the A1123 and A1421 from A road to B road status. ~~at this time but to carry out further consultation, analysis and discussion with communities; and~~
- c) ~~Request officers investigate potential options for traffic calming and speed reduction measures on these roads and possible sources of funding.~~

The proposed amendment was rejected as it negated the original recommendation.

It was resolved by majority to:

- a) Note the requirement for a decision on this matter to be taken by Committee, for the reasons set out in the report;
- b) On the balance of the technical analysis contained in this report not to progress the proposal to declassify the A1123 and A1421 from A road to B road status at this time but to carry out further consultation, analysis and discussion with communities; and
- b) Request officers investigate potential options for traffic calming and speed reduction measures on these roads and possible sources of funding.

19. Active Travel Fund: Mill Road Bus Gate Experimental Traffic Order

The Vice-Chair read a statement explaining that the Chair could not be present at the meeting and drawing attention to the significant amount of work he had done on this issue. She explained that like many Members she had engaged in debates on traffic management issues in the past. She provided the Committee with the details of her involvement with regard to the scheme and a petition related to it. The Council's Monitoring Officer had been consulted and had confirmed that she would be able to chair the meeting based on her assurance that she had an open mind and would listen to all views and consider all available options before the Committee. The Vice-Chair emphasised that she would chair this item impartially and that she was willing to consider all the available options; she hoped other Members would do the same.

The Committee received a report containing representations received during the statutory six-month objection period to the Mill Road Bus Gate Experimental Traffic Order (ETO) and the responses submitted as part of the additional non-statutory six-week public consultation on the bus gate and associated measures, in order to consider traffic management options for the future of Mill Road. It was noted that the Active Travel Fund had been introduced by the Government at the start of the Covid-19 pandemic to ensure social distancing was maintained on the transport network and to address concerns that congestion would increase if alternatives to the car were not provided. Due to the particularly short time in which schemes were required to be implemented, an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) was chosen for the implementation of the scheme, which came into effect on 24th June 2020.

Subsequently, a statutory 6-month consultation was undertaken, as well as a non-statutory 6-week public survey, both of which received a significant level of response. The fact that temporary restrictions resulting from the pandemic were in force for longer than anticipated meant the quality of data collected was impacted due to traffic in Cambridge currently still remaining at around 70% of normal pre-pandemic levels. It was therefore not yet possible to provide a full and detailed analysis of the impacts of the scheme. Attention was drawn to the negative and positive issues raised by respondents that were detailed in section 2 of the report. It was also noted that the Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) was undertaking a significant amount of work on access to Cambridge and the future use of the transport within and around the city, along with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority.

Mr Chris Smith was invited to address the Committee. Drawing attention to the large number of elderly and disabled residents in the area affected by the Mill Road bridge closure, Mr Smith argued that it had exacerbated the impacts of the pandemic and consequent restrictions. He observed that the closure had divided the local community at a time when it most needed to come together and asked whether the Council had logged complaints in the period between June and December 2020 about the impacts of the ETRO on the elderly and disabled, and whether it had acted upon those complaints to amend the scheme. The Head of Transport and Infrastructure (Policy and Funding) noted that responses to such issues were included in the consultation report attached as Appendix 3 to the report.

Mr Pierro D'Angelico was invited to address the Committee on behalf of the Mill Road Traders' Association. Highlighting that the association represented 164 business, he informed the Committee that 87.6% of the business had indicated they were suffering as a result of the bridge closure, with only 3.9% suggesting that they had benefitted, and the remaining 8.5% noting no direct impact. 19 shops had closed over six months, while a further 11 were up for sale. Noting that the original purpose of the 6-month closure was to enable social distancing, he argued that the expiration of that period and the lifting of such restrictions meant that there was no reason for the bridge to remain closed and called on the Committee to reopen it.

Mr Abdul Arain was invited to address the Committee. He explained that Mill Road was a unique, diverse, vibrant, ethnically mixed mile long stretch of road. It was a community of one family which included residents as well as traders. He highlighted the national reputation of Mill Road. As a Muslim in drew attention to the importance to him and others of the local mosque. He explained that the closure of Mill Road bridge put worshippers, particularly the disabled and the elderly, who lived on the other side of the bridge to the mosque at a particular disadvantage. He reminded the Committee that not all disability was visible. He also drew attention to the significant number of businesses who were suffering financially and for some businesses it was just a matter of survival. He therefore called on any transport solutions for Cambridge to be carried out holistically as a whole across the city.

The clerk read a statement from Mr Andrew Smith who was representing the businesses of Urban Larder and Garden Kitchen. Although trading was extremely difficult at the moment neither business had contributed this to the closure of the bridge. Mr Smith was of the view that the closure had the potential to improve the physical environment and Mill Road's appeal generally. The reduction in vehicles did not necessarily mean a reduction in pedestrians. It was noted that the reduction in car use had made for a pleasanter environment. The current closure was a bit of a blunt instrument and looked poor as it had not protected the safety of cyclists, offered nothing to those dependent on access and had led to an abuse of on street parking on both sides of the road. If the closure was to remain, there should be an effective consultation to work towards an improved final solution.

Ms Anna Williams, Camcycle, was invited to address the Committee. She expressed her strong support for the Mill Road Bus Gate Scheme as a way of improving journeys for those travelling by foot, on cycle, using mobility aids and in buses/dial-a-ride vehicles. The majority of correspondents to the consultation had responded positively to the impact of the overall scheme on walking and cycling, safety, air quality and noise. However, she acknowledged that Camcycle would like to see improvements to accessibility and the build outs and improved consultation. She believed that there was overwhelming community support for maintaining less traffic and a pleasant environment on Mill Road; although many of these voices might be quieter than those with opposing views. She disagreed with the reference in the report that the scheme had not impacted significantly on the Council's priority relating to children. She drew attention to the Council's pledge to put Climate Change and health at the heart of its work by highlighting the number of children and families who now found Mill Road a safe place to shop, visit and travel to school. In conclusion, she highlighted Camcycle's response to the consultation to improve the situation on Mill Road.

Ms Sheila Gresham, Cambs Antiques Centre, was invited to address the Committee. She highlighted the impact of the closure of the bridge on her business. Whilst it was difficult to accurately measure the impact of this closure due to Covid, the closure of the bridge for maintenance in 2019 had impacted on her business by a third. She drew attention to the disruption and pollution being created on neighbouring roads as a result of the closure. She was of the view that people who wanted to keep the bridge closed did not appreciate the impact on small shops. She highlighted the fact that a study had shown the air quality improving on Mill Road before it was shut in 2019. She was particularly concerned that the buildouts had made it even more dangerous for cyclists.

Ms Liz Walter, Mill Road for People, was invited to address the Committee. Mill Road for People was an organisation involving residents and traders who sought to find a compromise solution to make significant changes to the current situation, which worked for everyone. She highlighted eight key goals for a thriving, successful and sustainable street. The organisation had received positive feedback particularly at its street stalls where it had talked to hundreds of people. She was convinced that the large majority of residents and a significant number of traders favoured the organisation's ideas. She focussed on three robustly evidenced facts as follows: since the Order was introduced 14 new businesses had opened on Mill Road; pollution levels on Mill Road had regularly exceeded WHO guidelines before the Order was implemented; and a study on traffic levels during the 2019 closure had found no significant increase in traffic levels on Hills Road or Coldham's Lane and only a 10% increase in Cherry Hinton Road, and at the same time cycle journeys had risen considerably.

Mr Daniel Fulton was invited to address the Committee. He explained that businesses in Mill Road had experienced a 60% reduction in business, which was an objective and verifiable fact from local businesses. In his view, the report did not make it clear that the current ETRO was unlawful as there had been no appropriate public sector equality duty investigation when the decision was made originally. In addition Regulation 17 2a 1 of the Local Authority Traffic Regulation Orders 1996 required specific notices to be published by the Council which had not happened. He was therefore of the view that the current ETRO could not lawfully be made permanent, and he urged the Council to seek legal advice before proceeding. In response, Members were informed that the Council had taken legal advice throughout the process and was mindful of the points which had been made. The Council was content that the Order was lawful.

City Councillor Richard Robertson, Local Member for Petersfield, was invited to address the Committee. He explained that throughout the closure of the bridge, Petersfield residents had continued to suffer from traffic using Mill Road as a through route. Half of Mill Road west of the railway was used to access the station and to 'rat run' through to Hills Road. The volume of traffic using this route had grown during the closure. He stressed the importance of a comprehensive collection of data. He drew attention to the buildouts on Mill Road which needed to be replaced by measures to reduce the speed of traffic. The pavement on the north side of Mill Road in Petersfield needed to be widened. Better crossing points were needed and measures to prevent cars parking on the pavement. He was disappointed that no attempt had been made to collect data during the closure relating to pollution levels. He acknowledged that it was important to respect the views of both sides. He was of the view that the closure had impacted on

other roads so what was needed therefore was a strategy for the whole city, which reinforced the importance of recommendation d) in the report.

City Councillor Jocelyne Scutt, Local Member for West Chesterton, was invited to address the Committee. She explained that the closure of Mill Road had wide considerations across the city. She highlighted the breakdown in local community relations due to the paucity of the public consultation when the project was embarked on and the failure in the consultation since. She urged the Council to consider Cambridge as one city when it carried out consultations in the future. She was disappointed that the Mill Road consultation had not involved taxi drivers, people with a disability who held blue badges, and elderly people and their carers.

City Councillor Dave Baigent, Local Member for Romsey, was invited to address the Committee. He urged Members to take the moral high ground. The purpose of the Mill Road closure had been to reduce the spread of Covid. It had been a brave decision taken in uncertain times to do the right thing. He queried whether the decision should be an economic or political one or if the Council should hold on to the positive outcomes from the original decision and therefore it should be a moral decision above party politics. He highlighted the experience of a thirteen year old cyclist, which focussed particularly on climate change and safety. Mill Road bridge closure had steered 12,000 cars away from this street. He acknowledged that some traffic had gone elsewhere but 50% had disappeared. In the local election Councillor Baigent had stood on a pledge to keep Mill Road restricted and had topped the poll. The candidate who had pledged to open the road had come last.

Councillor Richard Howitt, Local Member for Petersfield, was invited to address the Committee. He acknowledged that there was a strong body of opinion both for and against bridge closure within Petersfield. There were many people who wanted less traffic but did not want the character of Mill Road from a trading perspective to change. He reminded the Committee that the ETRO had been a scheme to address Covid and the report made no case to continue the closure of this basis. Petersfield residents wanted better traffic management but not at the expense of their neighbours. There had been increases in traffic in East Road, Cherry Hinton Road and Coldham's Lane. He drew attention to the increase in carbon emissions resulting from the extra length of journeys. He stressed the importance of taking into account the claims made by traders in their survey, which was supported by 168 businesses. He therefore believed that the case was not proven to continue with the bridge closure. Any future closures should be considered as part of the City Access for Cambridge as a whole using the holistic approach set out in the report.

Councillor Shailer moved an amendment, seconded by Councillor Beckett, to delete recommendation b) and replace with the following:

- b1) To maintain the Mill Road bus gate experimental traffic order as temporary, with a view to make it permanent, and then initiate a full and fair consideration from a further period for public consultation and objection including full consultation on options for exemptions as outlined in paragraphs 2.23-2.27 of the report. Implement immediate resolution of taxi and disability access issues and make a final decision on which of the remaining 8 options would become permanent once the consultation was complete.

or

- b2) To remove the restriction and undertake a full review and consultation on the options and use of Mill Road to include possible exemptions, outlined in paragraphs 2.23-2.27 of the report, to include positive measures to counter the adverse economic impacts and in the light of further work to manage city access adopting the holistic approach outlined in the report.

In moving his amendment, Councillor Shailer reported that it was great to see so many people from Mill Road. The people who lived and worked on Mill Road were like a family and would still be friends long after this meeting. He explained that the amended options both had full consultations. The difference was that b2) brought the traffic back whilst the consultation was running. The consultation would provide more options which would give more help to traders. He drew attention to the real benefit of b1), which would provide the first disabled bus gate access in the city. Disabled car users would have help moving around the city and it would also help those disabled users who were on buses, mobility scooters and those with respiratory problems. Along with the removal of the buildouts, it would be possible to deal with the most disliked aspects of the emergency measures installed on Mill Road last year.

The Team Leader, Highways Infrastructure Projects and Major Infrastructure Delivery, explained that it was unlikely that a consultation could be completed, and a new Order introduced before the expiry of the current ETRO. There was therefore a significant risk that the current ETRO would expire before a modification could be introduced. It was also not clear what might be implemented as an immediate resolution of taxi and disability access issues. These would have to be introduced as a permanent Traffic Regulation Order and would need to follow consultation and advertisement, which again took time. He drew attention to the report which detailed the technological difficulties of a general exemption for disabled drivers, which could possibly render the restriction unenforceable.

While discussing the amendment, individual Members:

- confirmed that all Conservative Group members had a free vote on this issue.
- paid tribute to all the speakers for making their points in a logical and considerate way.
- expressed concern that it would be difficult to monitor blue badge holders as it was the person not the car who held the badge. It was also suggested that exemptions should be made for totally propelled electric vehicles.
- questioned that the time constraints outlined by the Team Leader effectively meant that the ETRO would lapse while the other work was going on, which would enable the Council to examine properly how it went forward. He suggested that this could include a facial recognition system for blue badge holders.
- highlighted that the purpose of the amendment was to allow the bridge to remain closed by addressing the concerns of taxi drivers and disabled users immediately. It was noted that there were a couple of committee meetings before the expiry date

which would enable the Committee to examine how taxi driver and disabled access was working. It was felt that opening the road up immediately would send the wrong message and would prevent the Council from undertaking a correct consultation, which identified all of these issues. There was currently a white list for taxi drivers in the City so the same could be compiled for blue badge holders if they identified a car. Another Member expressed concern that the decision was effectively being pre-determined as the current debate was about the amendment proposing either continued closure or reopening.

- suggested that this was a sensible amendment, which reflected the need to address environmental issues around Mill Road but also disability issues.
- expressed concern that b1) of the amendment was pre-determining the decision as it contained the words “with a view to make it permanent”.

Before the vote on the amendment, the Interim Director of Highways and Transport reminded the Committee that the amendment carried some risks, but Members were at liberty to accept the risks if they so wished. He invited the Team Leader, Highways Infrastructure Projects and Major Infrastructure Delivery to remind Members again of the risks. In addition to his previous points, he reported that the technology was not available at the moment to pinpoint a blue badge on a windscreen; officers were looking into these options. However, at the moment anyone wishing to access the bridge could claim they were going to carry a disabled driver.

In response, one Member queried whether a driver could be asked to prove they were carrying a blue badge holder if they received a penalty ticket. In response, it was a possibility that any driver driving over the bridge could appeal the penalty notice, but the onus was then on the driver to prove they had a disabled person on board. However, operationally it would be an extremely difficult situation to manage. Another Member reported that it was unlikely there would be a watertight solution from day one so the Council would have to live with some abuses to the system until other measures could be implemented to bring in a system which would work for most people.

On being put the vote, the amendment was carried by a majority.

While discussing the substantive motion, individual Members:

- acknowledged the impassioned comments for and against the closure. It was noted that some Councillors had been unable to vote for the amendment because of the issue of pre-determination in relation to b1). There was a need to have a full and open consultation without pre-determining the final outcome. The primary aim of the Council must be to enable people to get around efficiently and safely, but health was obviously equally important. However, the closure also impacted on other roads in the area such as Tenison Road. It was proposed that any further consultation should consider the implications of the work of the GCP in relation to the eastern access. It was not clear how the Council could achieve a meaningful consultation if it carried on with the ETRO.
- highlighted the need for any final decision to actually work for people and pull both sides together. It was acknowledged that even the local Councillors on the

Committee and those which had spoken were not necessarily of the same mind. It was therefore incumbent on the Committee to make a decision which was deliverable. There was concern that given the advice provided by the officers, recommendation b1) was high risk and possibly undeliverable. It was therefore important to deliver any scheme properly and not to pre-determine any decision.

- reminded the Committee that the ETRO had been introduced for Covid safety reasons. However, it was important to note that COVID was not over yet and it would be premature to remove the restrictions. It was felt that recommendation b1) gave an opportunity to see what had and had not worked.
- highlighted how difficult it was to drive down a road with so many different other road users. It was felt that the volume of vehicle traffic was inappropriate for such a road. It was acknowledged that there needed to be exemptions and the arguments had been well made by the public speakers. Recommendation b1) committed the Council to a full public consultation where the issues of access could be discussed as well as exploring all the options to identify the best fit.
- welcomed the local engagement on this issue but expressed disappointment that the debate had become so bitter. It was therefore hoped that the amendment would result in some consensus. Whilst welcoming the consultation, there was some frustration around the amount of quantitative data within it, which made it difficult to reach a final decision. All people appeared to agree that the consultation had been flawed and it was therefore important that the Council had the chance to look at this again. It was acknowledged that the current bridge closure had some issues such as the buildouts, which were not ideal. The Council would need to consider other mitigations to make the road safer, and actions to help traders such as shuttle buses connecting the Beehive Centre. It was acknowledged that the closure had made traffic worse for other roads, but it was important to remember that the traffic on these roads had been bad to start with. In supporting recommendation b1) it was important that the Council helped the other roads such as Coldham's Lane, Cherry Hinton Road and East Road.
- highlighted the need to help traders in Mill Road which would be part of the consultation. The Council wanted people to shop locally and use active transport. A lack of planning had forced cars into streets which were never designed for them. Mill Road was narrow with high pollution levels. Thousands of people on foot, bikes and mobility scooters were right next to the traffic and exposed to all the dangers that came with it. The Joint Administration agreement included a commitment to a modal shift in transport working together with the GCP and the Combined Authority, as well as a greener and fairer Cambridge. The Joint Administration wanted to prioritise shoppers over cars in Mill Road. City Access at the moment proposed a holistic approach.
- queried why some people were trying to make this a partisan issue as it was really an issue of conscience. It was noted that Councillor Howitt was one of the authors of the Joint Administration agreement, as quoted by a previous Councillor. All of the Committee had received an e-mail before the meeting from the Chair of the Committee who could not be present stating a proposal to amend the recommendation. He had also asked the Committee to support recommendation

b1), which was effectively pre-determining the decision. For the A1123 and A1421 Reclassification to 'B' Road Status, the Committee had been told by the Joint Administration that it was not possible to deal with roads in isolation, but this did not appear to be the case in relation to Mill Road.

It was resolved by a majority using the Vice-Chair's casting vote to:

- a) Consider both the responses to the informal public consultation and formal objections to the Experimental Traffic Order;
- b) Remove the restriction and undertake a full review and consultation on the options and use of Mill Road to include possible exemptions, outlined in paragraphs 2.23-2.27 of the report, to include positive measures to counter the adverse economic impacts and in the light of further work to manage city access adopting the holistic approach as outlined in the report;
- c) Remove the temporary build-outs from Mill Road as detailed in paragraphs 2.10-2.13 of the report; and
- d) Instruct officers to consider funding opportunities to carry out further consultation and development of a plan to address issues in Mill Road.

20. A14 Local Network Issues

The Committee received a report which provided an update on local issues associated with the A14 Huntingdon to Cambridge scheme being delivered by Highways England (HE) and discussion on progress on their resolution with an HE representative. It also sought approval of proposed changes to the access control barriers on the two bridges at Bar Hill and Swavesey. It was noted that the project design had been carried out before the recently published LTN 1/20 guidance from the Government and that the County Council was working with HE to improve safe access as a result. It was emphasised that lessons learned from the project would be taken into consideration with the development of other future projects. The HE A14 Project Director informed the Committee that HE carried out Post Opening Project Evaluations (POPEs) of schemes a year after their completion in order to assess whether they had achieved the expected traffic, economic and environmental benefits. Due to reduced traffic levels as a result of Covid-19, it had been decided to carry out the review in March 2022, once traffic levels had returned to pre-pandemic levels.

The Vice-Chair invited Anna Williams to address the Committee on behalf of Camcycle. Welcoming the report's recommendation to remove exclusionary barriers and replace them with safe bollard arrangements, Ms Williams expressed concern that resolving the matter had overshadowed further issues with the A14 project. She argued that crossing facilities were dangerous at roundabouts on junctions, as it could take pedestrians up to 15 seconds to cross carriageways on which vehicles were travelling at up to 60mph. Ms Williams suggested that such situations could have been averted by simple design changes and highlighted the importance of ensuring that similar situations did not arise with future projects, such as the A428.

Councillor Ian Gardener, the County Councillor for the Alconbury and Kimbolton division, was invited to address the Committee. Drawing attention to severe damage suffered by multiple roads in the local area during the construction phase of the A14 project, including potholes, damaged verges and collapsed road edges, Councillor Gardener highlighted that many vehicles, including HGVs, did not use official diversion routes, instead following unsuitable routes suggested by satellite navigation devices. He argued that insufficient signage had been installed by Highways England and that local properties had experienced damage as a result, while littering was a constant problem and stones were thrown up by vehicles. He drew particular attention to such issues on the B1043 and called for Highways England to repair local roads and remove HGVs from unsuitable roads through additional signage and weight limits.

The Vice-Chair invited David Stoughton to address the Committee on behalf of Living Streets Cambridge. Mr Stoughton informed the Committee that, as part of the Cut the Clutter campaign run nationally by Living Streets, over 80 sites in Cambridge had been identified where pavements were sufficiently blocked by obstacles, such as traffic signs, lampposts, street furniture and pavement parking, to make them unpassable for wheelchair users, parents with buggies and visually impaired pedestrians, and sometimes even all pedestrians. Noting that some of the obstacles were the responsibility of the Council, he asked whether the Committee would prioritise their removal or repositioning as a matter of urgency to allow free movement and promote active travel, and also asked whether the Committee would agree to issue a schedule of repairs and improvements to footways following their inspection.

Councillor Tom Sanderson, the County Councillor for the Huntingdon West division, was invited to address the Committee. Councillor Sanderson expressed concern about signage on the A1307 encouraging HGVs to use the Pathfinder link road and Huntingdon ring road, which was causing significant damage to the roadway and disruption for residents. Acknowledging that work was still ongoing, he called on HE to meet with residents to find a solution to the problem.

While discussing the report, Members:

- Welcomed the completion of the A14 project and acknowledged that teething problems were inevitable and should be resolved as soon as possible.
- Expressed concern about HGVs using inappropriate roads and access routes.
- Queried why 40mph restrictions remained in place on certain stretches of the A1307, noting that the road was experiencing very low levels of traffic. Officers confirmed that the speed restrictions were temporary, and that final discussions were still ongoing between HE and the Council about signage, and the Assistant Director for Infrastructure and Growth undertook to investigate the issue and report back to Members. **Action required**
- Emphasised the need for repairs to be carried out in villages affected by diverted traffic during the construction phase, and suggested that more pro-active mitigation measures should be planned for future projects. It was confirmed that discussions were ongoing with the Department for Transport and HE about additional funding in the region of £4m to £5m from outside the A14 project budget that could be secured

for necessary repairs to the local road network, and also that work was being undertaken to ensure that future projects did not cause similar problems, through better signage and engagement with satellite navigation companies. It was noted that the affected roads did not have weight restrictions and therefore the Council was unable to enforce a restriction on their usage by HGVs, although HE was investigating the effectiveness of weight limits to discourage their usage in the future.

- Expressed frustration that previous unanimous calls from the Committee for weight restrictions to be placed on roads that were unsuitable for HGVs had not been acted upon. It was acknowledged that enforcement would be difficult, but Members argued that such restrictions would nonetheless have led to less damage. The Assistant Director for Infrastructure and Growth recognised the frustrations and reassured Members that the issue was being considered at the highest level with the intention to find the most effective solution for future projects, and that the Council was not against the implementation of weight restrictions. Nonetheless, Members reiterated a request for temporary weight restrictions to be implemented, regardless of their considered effectiveness.
- Suggested that the installation of arrows on the A1307 indicating two-way traffic would improve safety. The Assistant Director for Infrastructure and Growth acknowledged that there was a risk of drivers thinking that it was a dual carriageway and undertook to review how such measures could be implemented. **Action required**
- Highlighted the need for a safe crossing from Conington to Fen Drayton over the A1307 and queried how it could be included for major project infrastructure delivery. The Committee was informed that a Stage 3 Road Safety Audit recently carried out by HE to assess the risk of not having a formal crossing point had concluded that warning signage should be introduced along the A1307. The Council had not agreed with the conclusion and it was confirmed that it would be reviewed as part of the trunking process.
- Emphasised the need to adopt the LTN 1/20 guidance on the A428 project, as well as greater attention to improving biodiversity. It was acknowledged that the LTN 1/20 was guidance and not a requirement, although the HE Project Director assured Members that the project would reach the highest standard that it was possible to achieve. He also noted the A428 project was still in its design stage and confirmed there was scope to improve the biodiversity net gain.
- Expressed concern that a delay to the POPE would result in a significant delay to dealing with unintended consequences of the project and queried whether it could be undertaken before March 2022. The HE A14 Project Director noted that another reason for the delay was to allow the works in Huntingdon to be completed and for the scheme to be fully open, which would be early 2022. Members expressed concern that HE would be less willing to undertake measures so long after completion of the project, but the Assistant Director for Infrastructure and Growth assured Members that there was a legal agreement for HE to formally resolve unintended consequences on certain parts of the scheme.

- Argued that necessary repairs identified by the POPE should not be classified as Road Investment Strategy 3 (RIS3) measures in 2025, as that would unnecessarily delay their resolution. It was noted that the results of the POPE could not be prejudged and while some measures might require lower levels of intervention, it was possible that RIS3 measures would be required. Actions would be identified and discussed jointly between HE and the Council.
- Expressed concern about the derelict buildings alongside the A14 in Bar Hill and the fact that the report did not indicate a solution for either reoccupying them or developing an alternative access to them, particularly given the possibility of land contamination resulting from the former petrol station. The HE A14 Project Director informed the Committee that the contaminated land issue had been resolved and that HE was working to safely dispose of the site.
- Highlighted the lack of consultation with local residents and local Members on the Bar Hill crossing and emphasised the need to ensure greater engagement with such stakeholders in the future.
- Welcomed the independent safety review that was undertaken on the NMU crossing cycle barriers that had resulted in the recommendation to replace them with bollards.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Note the current issues and progress with their resolution; and
- b) Approve the proposed changes to the access barriers currently installed on the Non-Motorised User (NMU) bridges at Bar Hill and Swavesey junctions outlined in section 4.0 of this report.

21. Finance Monitoring Report – June 2021

This item was deferred to the next meeting, when the latest Finance Monitoring Report would be considered.

22. Cambridgeshire County Council's response to Network Rail's consultation on the Ely Area Capacity Enhancement Scheme (Ely South)

The Committee received a report that set out the proposed response to Network Rail's consultation on the Ely Area Capacity Enhancement Scheme (Ely South), and which sought a delegation to submit the final consultation response to the Executive Director for Place and Economy. It was noted that Local Members had been recently briefed by Network Rail on the scheme.

While discussing the consultation response, Members:

- Highlighted that concerns had been raised by local residents regarding the Kiln Lane crossing and called for assurances that the local area would be protected.

- Welcomed the scheme and noted that one of its benefits would be to reduce levels of westbound freight from Felixstowe on the A14.
- Emphasised the need for Network Rail to ensure the scheme sufficiently cater for a potential increase in future traffic levels due to additional services connecting Cambridge to Wisbech through the junction.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Note and comments on Network Rail Consultation on the Ely Area Capacity Enhancement Scheme Consultation; and
- b) Delegate the agreement of the final consultation response to the Executive Director, Place and Economy in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Highways and Transport Committee.

23. Major Infrastructure Project Delivery, Governance and Risk Management

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

24. Highway Services Contract Key Performance Indicators – Quarterly Report

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

25. Highways and Transport Committee Agenda Plan and Appointments to Outside Bodies

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

Chair
7th September 2021